Shipping was MUCH faster than it said it would be. So here you go guys the final volume of Breath.

ENJOY!!!!!!!!

P.S.

I don't know how people can do this everyday! I didn't even have to translate and it took forever!

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Portrait

5

Chifumi Ochi

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I can't exactly call him either.
or I'd just be a nuisance.
Not to mention if Ten is around,
then we'd be in *real* trouble.
flop
...
Yanagi-kun

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Am I good enough
To be honest,
I'm still a little afraid
If I were ever betrayed again by someone I trusted,
Afraid to leave myself so open and vulnerable again.
...fraid to admit that I'm in love.

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IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS AT ALL, REALLY.
I JUST WANT YOU TO ESCORT ME TO KOHSHI'S HOUSE
Ha!
NO NEED TO BE SO UPTIGHT ABOUT IT!
NOW THAT...
IS AN EXCELLENT QUESTION
WHY HIS PLACE?
WHY KOH-SHI'S?

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...
WHOA.
WAIT A SEC.
ARE YOU TWO HAVING SOME SORT OF TIFF?
IF SO, THEN I'M SORRY.
IT'S A POLICY OF MINE NEVER TO INTERFERE WITH SOMEBODY ELSE'S BUSINESS.
GIVE IT A REST.
SAVE YOUR BULLSHIT FOR SOMEONE WHO GIVES A DAMN.

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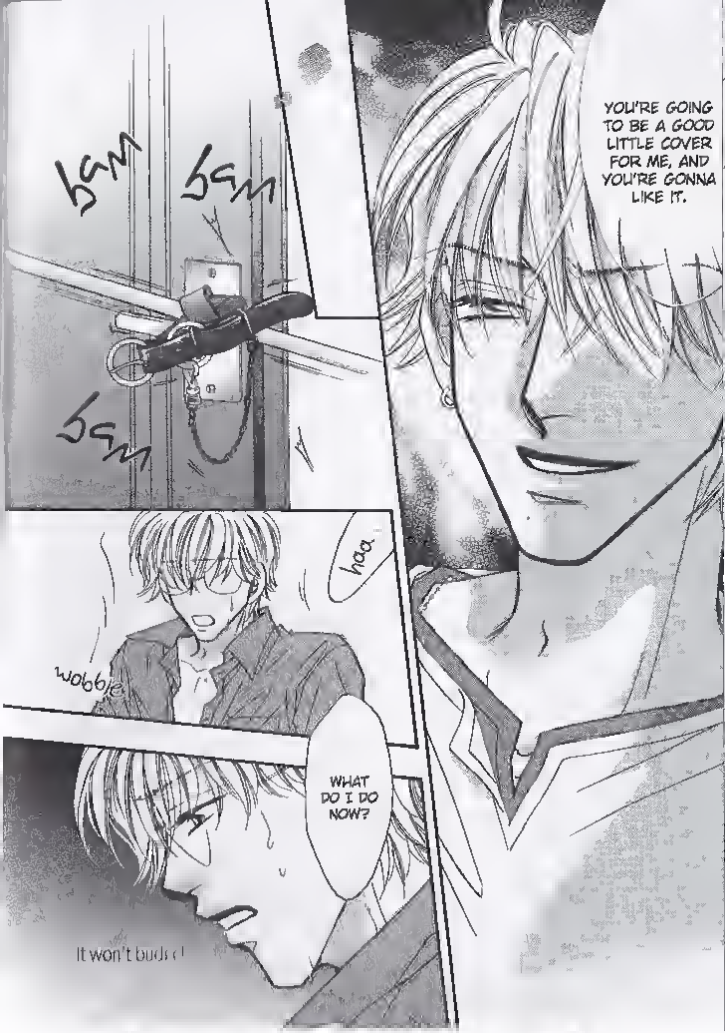

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Yanagi-kun won't be safe much longer
I don't know what Takashi has planned, but I know it can't be good.
But there's no way I could jump down from this height
The window...?

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...
SORRY, BUT I WAS JUST ON MY WAY OUT.
I JUST WANTED ...
TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT
Too busy to talk about Ten-kun, then?
You must be interested now, right?
To be more specific, it's about Ten-kun and... Arata-kun, was it?

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I WAS CERTAIN OUR LAST "ENCOUNTER" WOULD HAVE MADE THAT CLEAR TO YOU,
BUT YOU JUST HAD TO GO AND TOUCH WHAT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU YET AGAIN.
ARATA-SAN.
...DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU.
OH, HE VERY MUCH DOES.
YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT HE'D WANT?!
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF WHAT HE WANTS.
I'VE DECIDED THAT HE BELONGS TO ME,
AND THAT'S FINAL.

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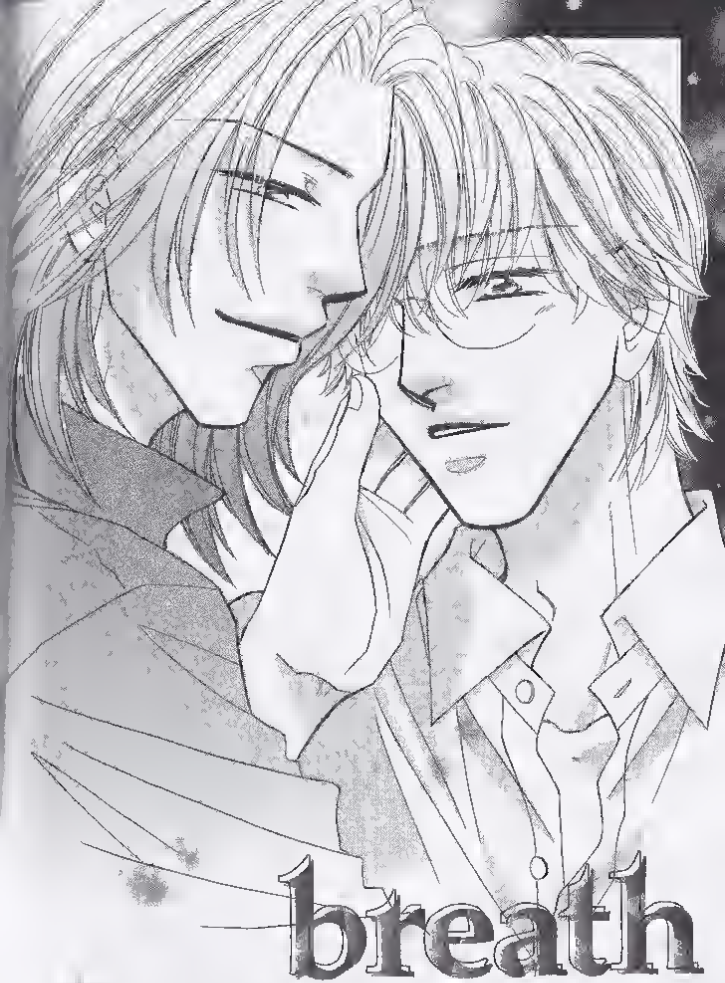

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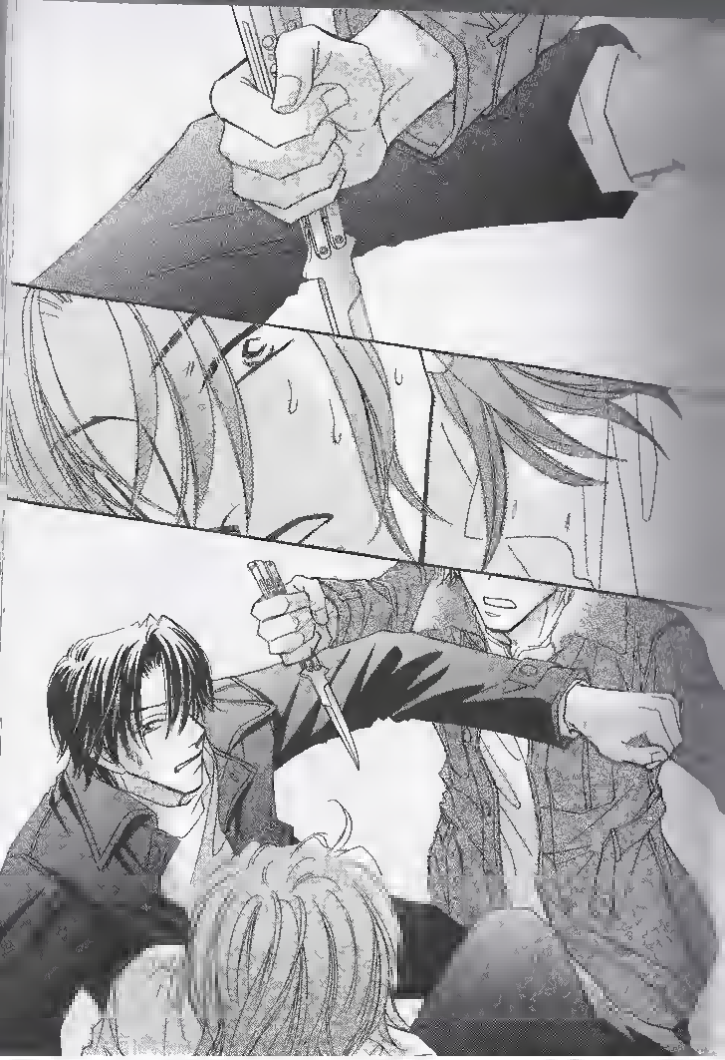

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...
NAOTO-SAN!
DAMN IT!
AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO INTERFERE, KASHIWAGI?
I MAY HAVE DONE SOME SHITTY STUFF MYSELF,
BUT EVEN I KNOW WHEN THINGS ARE TAKEN TOO FAR.
Sheer
TOO FAR?

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WHY, YOU ASK?
DON'T MAKE ME REPEAT MYSELF AGAIN.
—!
TEN, WHY...
...ARE YOU DOING THIS?
...
YOU CAN'T DO THIS
AND WHO'S GONNA STOP ME?
I'M JUST MAKING SURE YOU STAY OUT OF ARATA'S SIGHT FOR GOOD
HOW HARD IS THAT TO WRAP YOUR SIMPLE HEAD AROUND?

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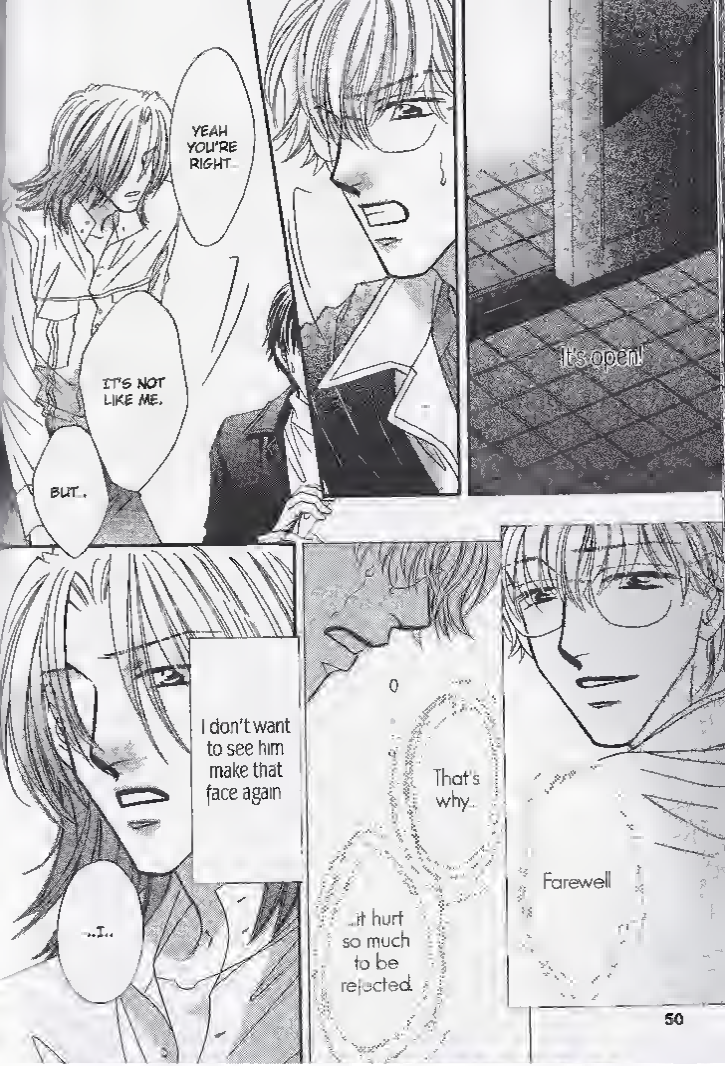

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Ha!
I LOVE ARATA-SAN.
NEVER IN A MILLION YEARS DID I THINK I'D HEAR THOSE WORDS COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTH.
—
AND NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO,
YOU CAN'T KEEP ME FROM HIM.
LOVE?
YOU?
IN LOVE WITH ARATA?

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swish
AS IF THAT ISN'T THE BIGGEST JOKE OF THE CENTURY.
TEN!
hmph!
I'VE TAKEN CARE OF ARATA ALL MY LIFE!
AND NOW YOU HONESTLY EXPECT ME TO JUST...
...LET YOU WALTZ IN AND TAKE HIM FROM ME?!

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—
MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME
BUT WHAT IF THAT'S WHAT ARATA-SAN WANTS?!
NO ONE KNOWS ARATA BETTER THAN I DO, AND NO ONE IS CAPABLE OF LOVING HIM AS MUCH AS I DO!
STAYING WITH ME IS THE BEST THING FOR HIM!
PUSH
!
YOU'RE WRONG, TEN!

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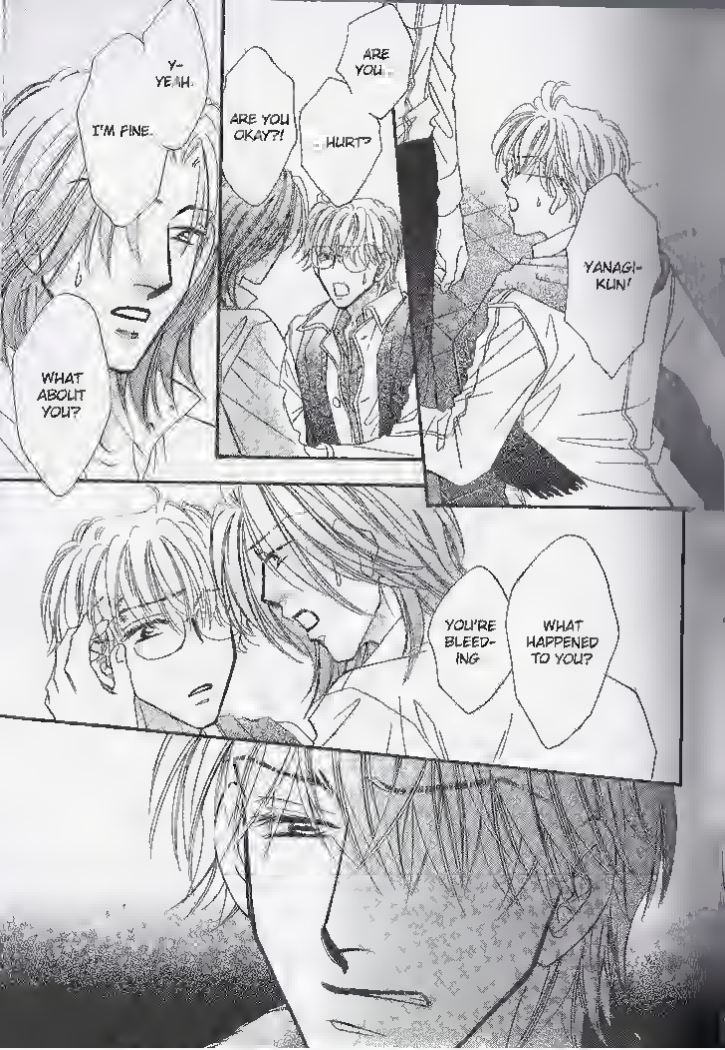

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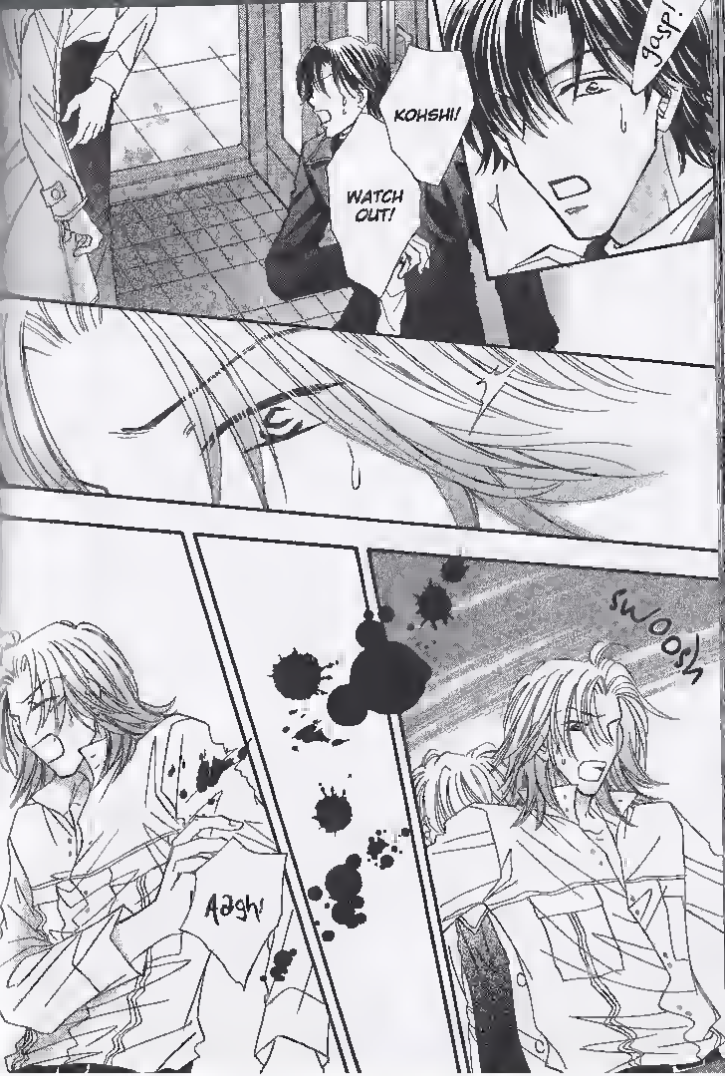

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TAKASHI ...!
YANAGI-KUN!
I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I SEE BLOOD FLOW.
BUT NOW I COULDN'T CARE LESS.
I CONSIDERED MURDER TOO MUCH OF A RISK TO TAKE
UNTIL JUST A SECOND AGO,

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CHOMP
AS LONG AS I HAVE YOU, I DON'T NEED ANYONE ELSE
ANYONE WHO GETS BETWEEN US
IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN OBSTACLE
BECAUSE I LOVE YOU, ARATA
HE'S A NUISANCE!
YANAGI-KUN ISN'T-
YOU'RE WRONG!
NO!

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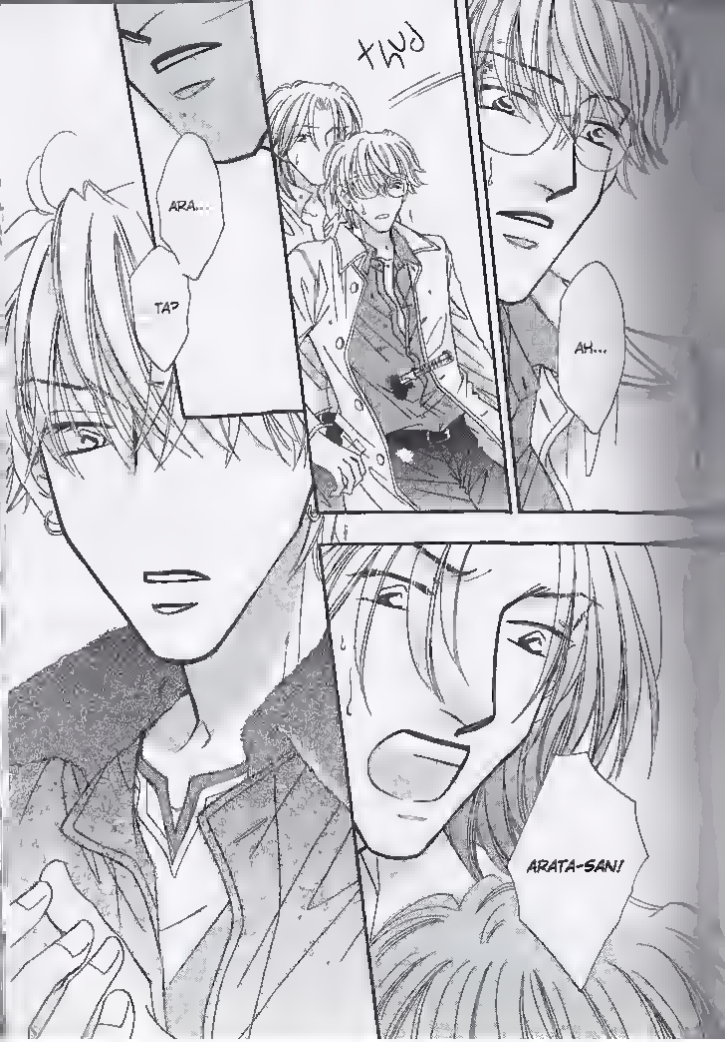

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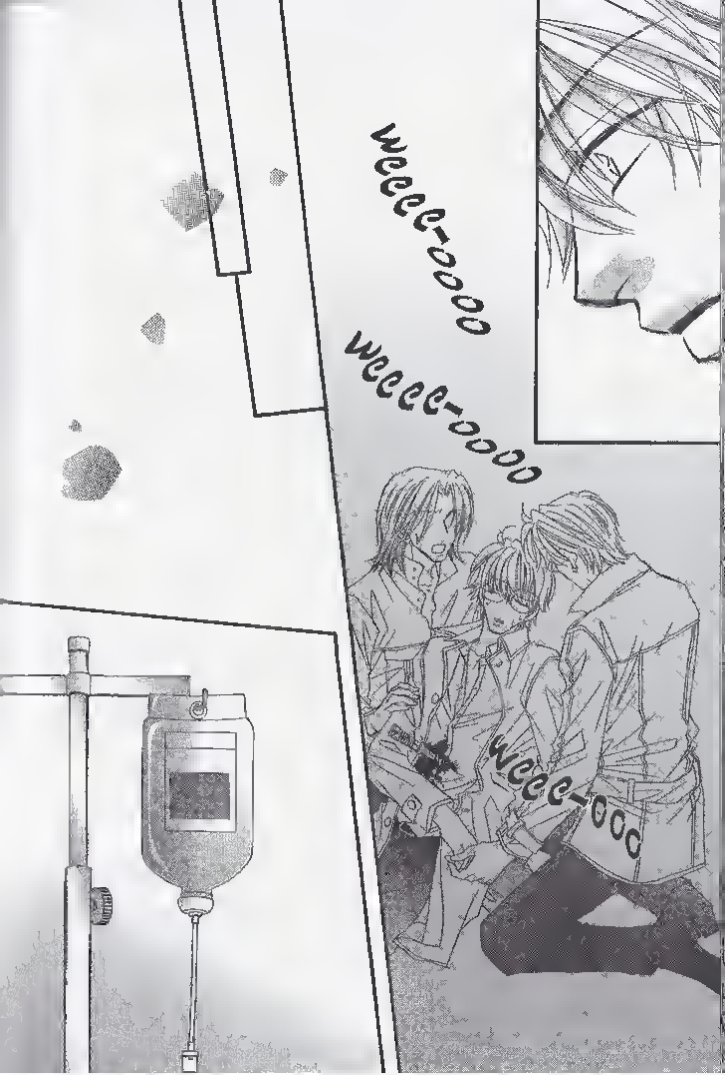

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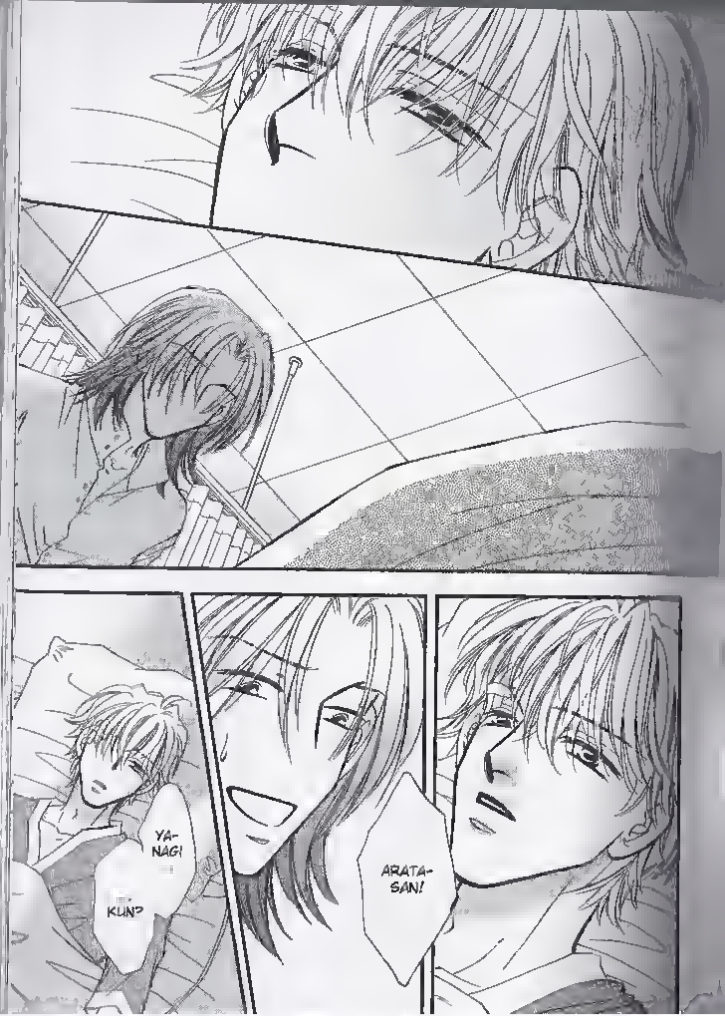

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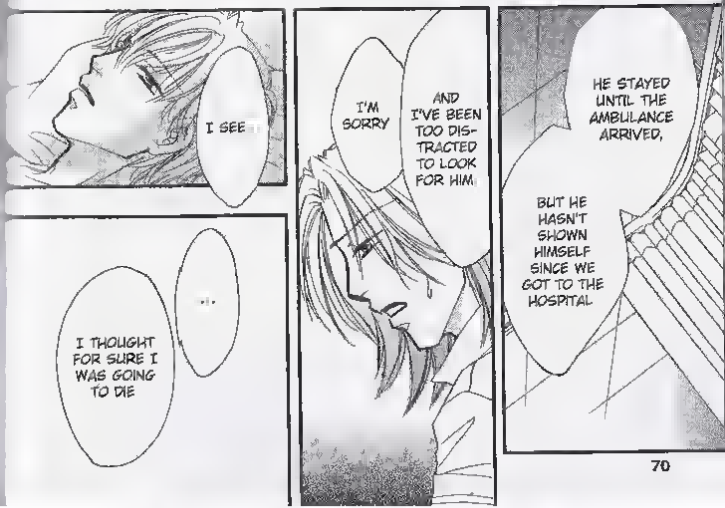
I SEE
I'M SORRY
AND I'VE BEEN TOO DISTRACTED TO LOOK FOR HIM.
HE STAYED UNTIL THE AMBULANCE ARRIVED,
BUT HE HASN'T SHOWN HIMSELF SINCE WE GOT TO THE HOSPITAL
I THOUGHT FOR SURE I WAS GOING TO DIE

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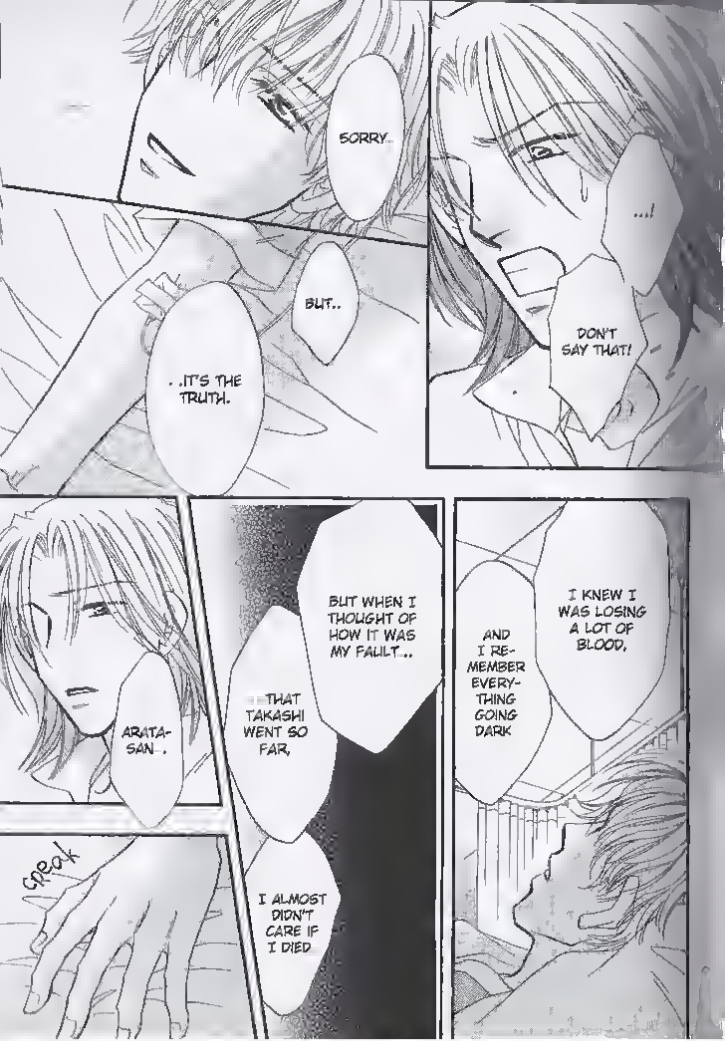
SORRY.
BUT..
..IT'S THE TRUTH.
...!
DON'T SAY THAT!
ARATA-SAN..
creak
I ALMOST DIDN'T CARE IF I DIED.
THAT TAKASHI WENT SO FAR,
BUT WHEN I THOUGHT OF HOW IT WAS MY FAULT...
AND I RE-MEMBER EVERY-THING GOING DARK
I KNEW I WAS LOSING A LOT OF BLOOD.

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...BE-CAUSE I...
...LOVE YOU TOO, YANAGI-KUN.
I'M HAPPY I DIDN'T DIE.
But I never knew
turned a blind eye to them and denied their existence
for so long
I'd resisted those words
It could be o sweet to say them

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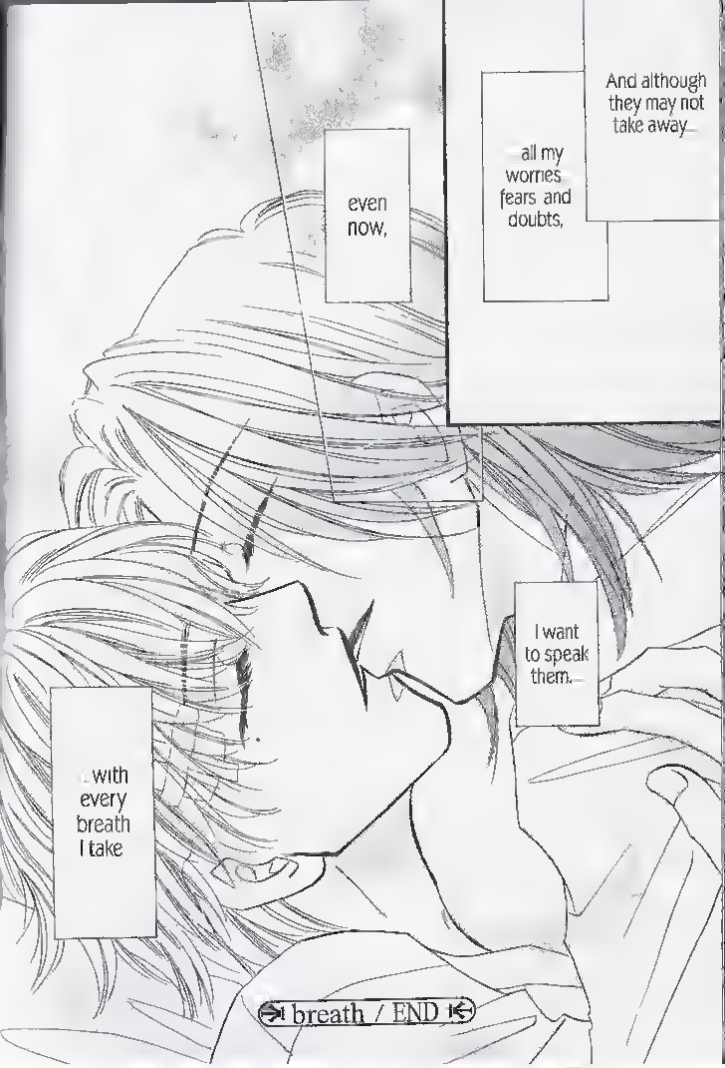
And although they may not take away
all my worries fears and doubts,
even now,
I want to speak them.
with every breath I take
breath / END

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During the accident, I didn't know how things would turn out.
Thankfully, the wound wasn't deep, so there was no nerve damage...
...or need for major surgery
Nurse's Station
Thanks for all your help
Why, thank you!
flop
I was shocked by how quickly he was released.
Having imagined the worst case scenario,
Arata-san was finally released from the hospital
It's been one week since we confessed our love for each other.

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WE'RE READY TO LEAVE, SIR.
THANKS AGAIN FOR YOUR HELP
YUP
THIS IS ALL OF IT, RIGHT, ARATA-SAN?
TUCK!
Wooom
?
The one thing that still weighed heavily on my con science.
YANAGI-KUN?
Of course that didn't mean that everything was settled

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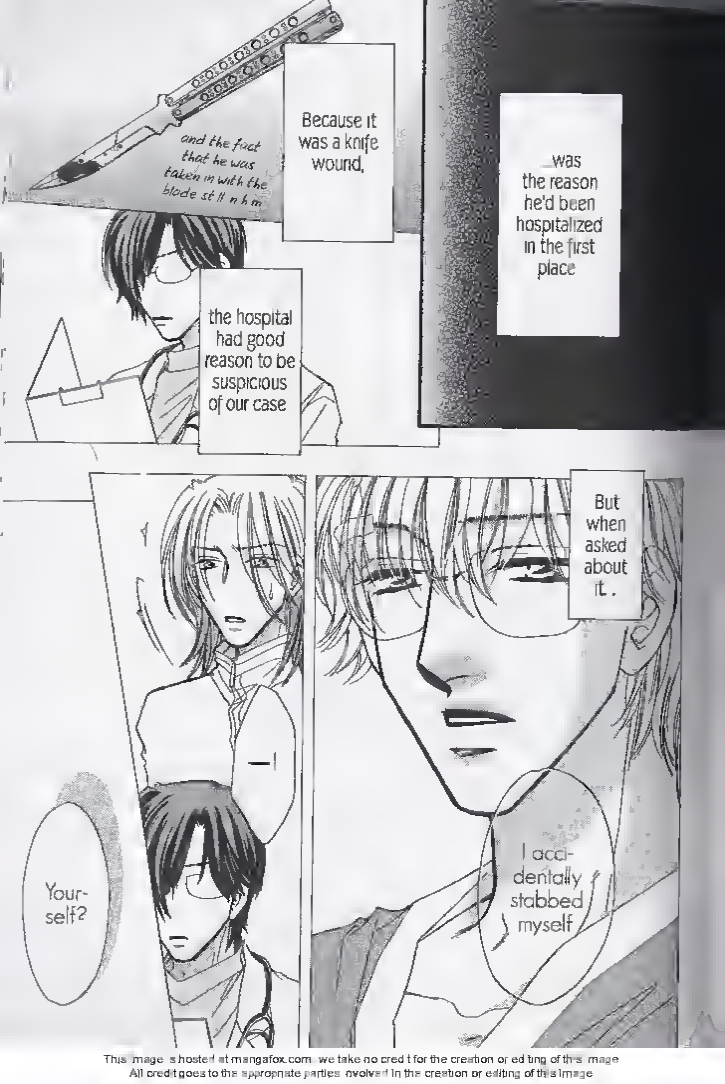
and the fact that he was taken in with the blade still in him
Because it was a knife wound,
...was the reason he'd been hospitalized in the first place
the hospital had good reason to be suspicious of our case
But when asked about it.
I accidentally stabbed myself
—I
Yourself?

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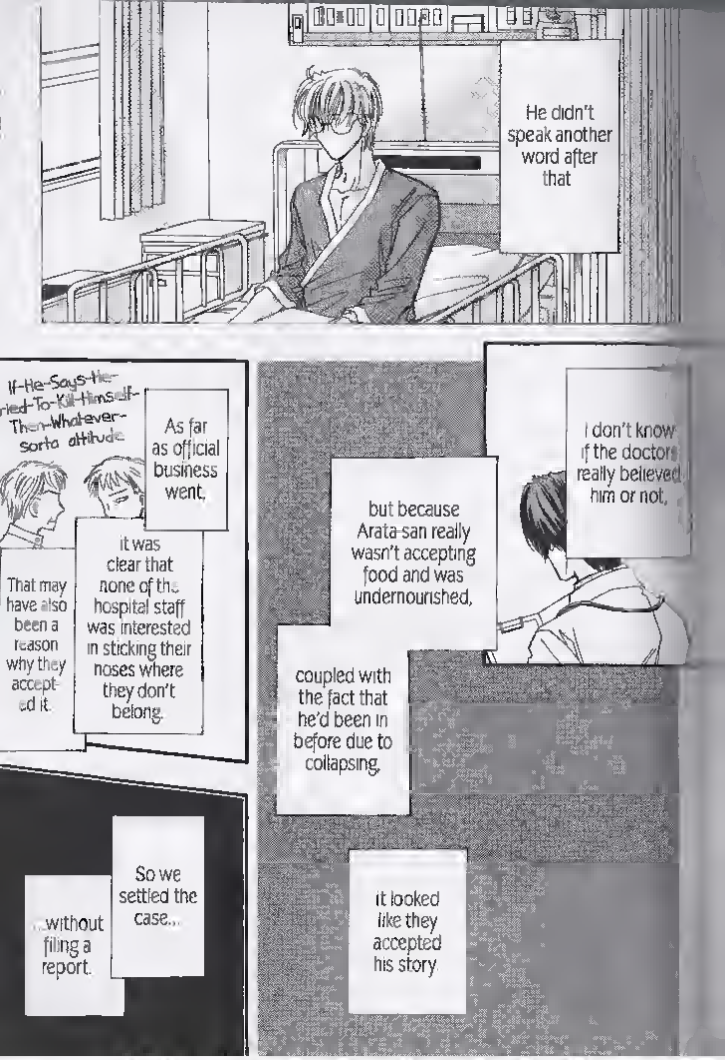
He didn't speak another word after that
I don't know if the doctors really believed him or not,
but because Arata-san really wasn't accepting food and was undernourished,
coupled with the fact that he'd been in before due to collapsing,
it looked like they accepted his story.
If-He-Says-He-Tried-To-Kill-Himself-Then-Whatever-Sorta attitude
As far as official business went,
it was clear that none of the hospital staff was interested in sticking their noses where they don't belong.
That may have also been a reason why they accepted it.
So we settled the case...
...without filing a report.

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How could anything possibly be fine?!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?!
IT'LL BE FINE
ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO THAT APARTMENT?
YANAGI-KUN
I'VE TOLD YOU A DOZEN TIMES ALREADY THAT IT WOULDN'T WORK OUT.
MY APARTMENT IS MUCH CLOSER TO MY OFFICE
Well, Arata-san had to know the conse-quences.
If Ten were ever to come back...
..!
LISTEN, YOU SHOULD REALLY BE STAYING AT MY PLACE
BESIDES, MY PARENTS ARE HARDLY EVER HOME

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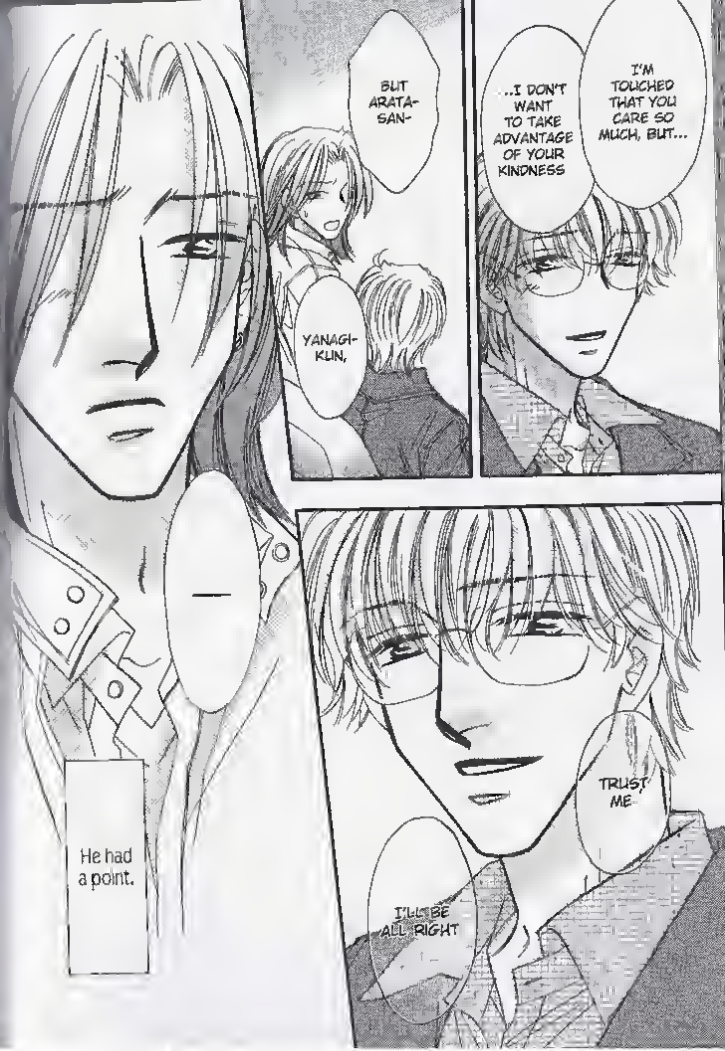

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...that things were just going to be all right.
smack
There was no evidence that Ten had been back to the apartment.
But no matter how many times he tried to reassure me,
smack
smack
I couldn't make myself think

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Squeak
WE'RE HEADED OUT NOW. SEE YOU!
OH! SENPAI!
clomp
clomp
SEE YOU
Then again,
there were still some things I was having a hard time getting out
Whew, I nearly jumped out of my skin there! Close call, huh?
Jeez, no need to be so damn jumpy
It's not like I have any reason to scold you again
Practice is already over
Pffff
Flick

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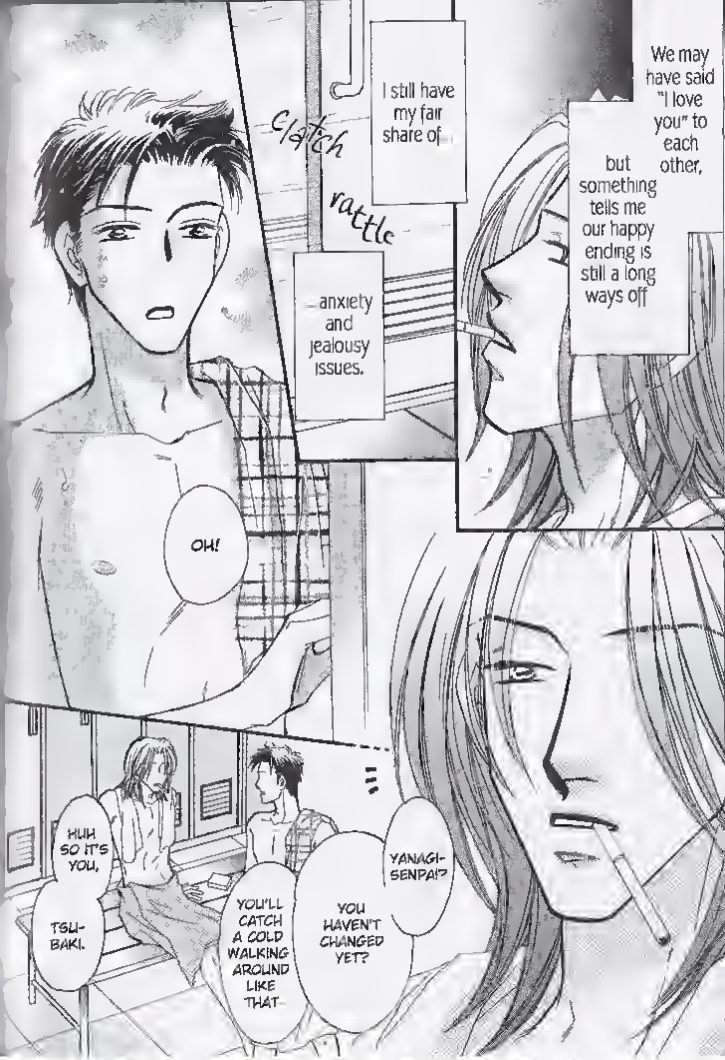
We may have said "I love you" to each other,
but something tells me our happy ending is still a long ways off
I still have my fair share of
clatter
rattle
anxiety and jealousy issues.
OH!
HUH. SO IT'S YOU, TSUBAKI.
YOU'LL CATCH A COLD WALKING AROUND LIKE THAT.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED YET?
YANAGI-SENPAI?

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LOOK, I WAS JUST PULLING YOUR CHAIN
hahaha
Why would you make something like that up.
for crying out loud?!
Sen-pai
SO?
HOW HAVE THINGS BEEN GOING RECENTLY?
T/N *In Japan, a thumbs up sign also means "boyfriend"
B-boy-friend?!
blush
THINGS?
DON'T MAKE ME SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU!
WHAT SORT OF THINGS?
I'M ASKING ABOUT YOUR BOYFRIEND
IT IS A BOYFRIEND, RIGHT?
That's right.

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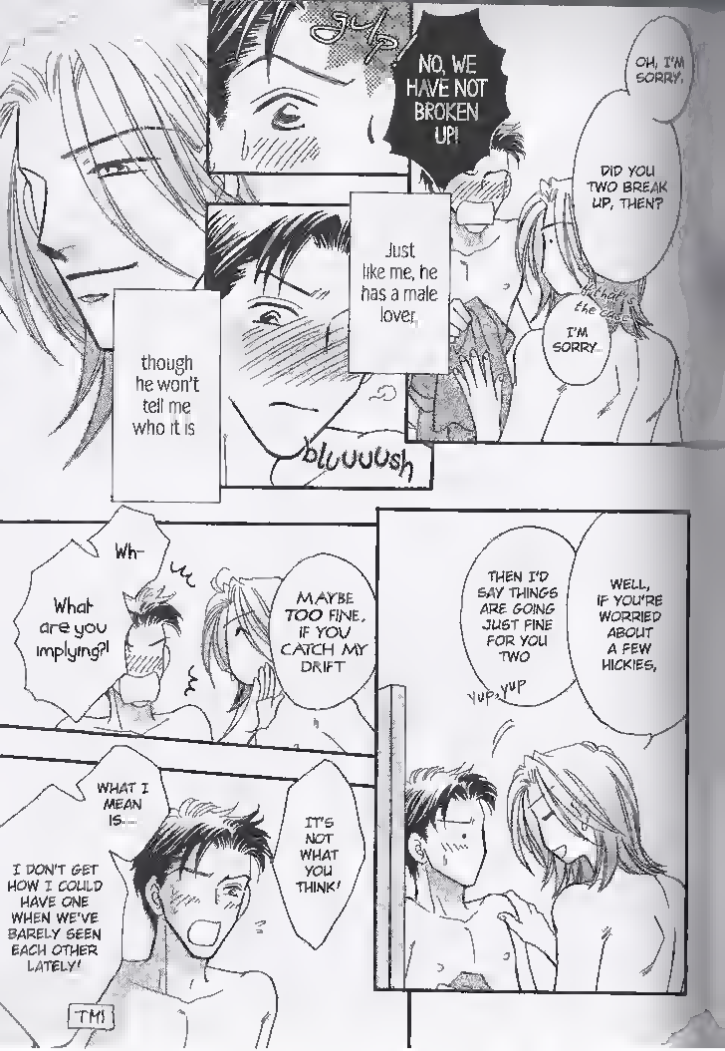
NO, WE HAVE NOT BROKEN UP!
OH, I'M SORRY.
DID YOU TWO BREAK UP, THEN?
Just like me, he has a male lover,
though he won't tell me who it is
bluuuush
I'M SORRY.
Wh-
What are you implying?!
MAYBE TOO FINE, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT
THEN I'D SAY THINGS ARE GOING JUST FINE FOR YOU TWO
WELL, IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A FEW HICKIES,
yup, yup
WHAT I MEAN IS—
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!
I DON'T GET HOW I COULD HAVE ONE WHEN WE'VE BARELY SEEN EACH OTHER LATELY!
TM

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HE'S JUST BEEN REALLY BUSY WITH WORK.
HUH. I see
YEAH WELL,
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN SEEING EACH OTHER MUCH?
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
IT'S BEEN NEARLY A MONTH.
HE'S JUST REALLY BUSY.
I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL THAT A GOOD RELATION-SHIP.
...
SORRY, TSUBAKI.
Huh?

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EVEN IF I DID TRUST HIM, THAT DOESN'T AUTOMATICALLY MAKE EVERY-THING OKAY.
HUH?
...?
THEN ...
WHY ...?
SURE, I WANT TO TRUST HIM.
BUT YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO KNOW WHAT YOUR LOVER'S THINKING ALL THE TIME, RIGHT?
THAT LACK OF KNOWING CAN CAUSE A LOT OF MIS-UNDER-STAND-INGS,
AND YOU CAN DRIVE YOURSELF CRAZY WITH WORRY.
...
SO I DECIDED TO...
...JUST GET OVER IT.

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SINCE I LOVE HIM,
I SHOULD SPEAK UP IF I'M FEELING ANXIOUS.
SO THAT EVEN IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE FEELS, I CAN STILL HAVE CONFIDENCE IN MY OWN FEELINGS.
I DECIDED THAT IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAT I TRUST MYSELF, RATHER THAN HIM.
hahaha
Hell I dont even know how I feel somet mes
BUT... YEAH
IT'S STILL SORTA HIT-OR-MISS
PLUS,

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"But what if your lover thinks you're being a pest?"
Have you ever considered that?"
TRUST OR NOT, LOVE DOESN'T CHANGE
THAT'S WHY IT'S A "IT CAN'T BE HELPED" SORT OF SITUATION.
Hmm
I guess that has happened a few times but...
just bottling everything up inside...
has never quite worked out for me

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YANAGI-KUN?
clomp
WHAT'S UP?
IF YOU'D TOLD ME YOU WERE COMING OVER, I COULD'VE GOTTEN OUT OF WORK EARLIER
ANY-WAY, LET ME PUT SOME TEA ON.
LET'S SEE WHERE DID I PUT THEM?

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SAY YOU'LL STAY AT MY PLACE FROM NOW ON
NEITHER OF US KNOWS WHEN TEN MIGHT SHOW UP AGAIN.
AND I CAN'T RISK LEAVING YOU HERE ALONE
YOU MAY THINK EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY,
BUT I CAN'T GO ALONG WITH IT!
squeeze
THINGS AREN'T GOING TO BE OKAY!
YANAGI-KUN

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I'M SORRY.
I UNDER-STAND THAT YOU MUST BE WORRIED, BUT STILL...
SO THERE'S NO CHANGING YOUR MIND?
NO, IT'S NOT THAT.
IT'S JUST...
I DON'T THINK TAKASHI WILL EVER BE COMING BACK.

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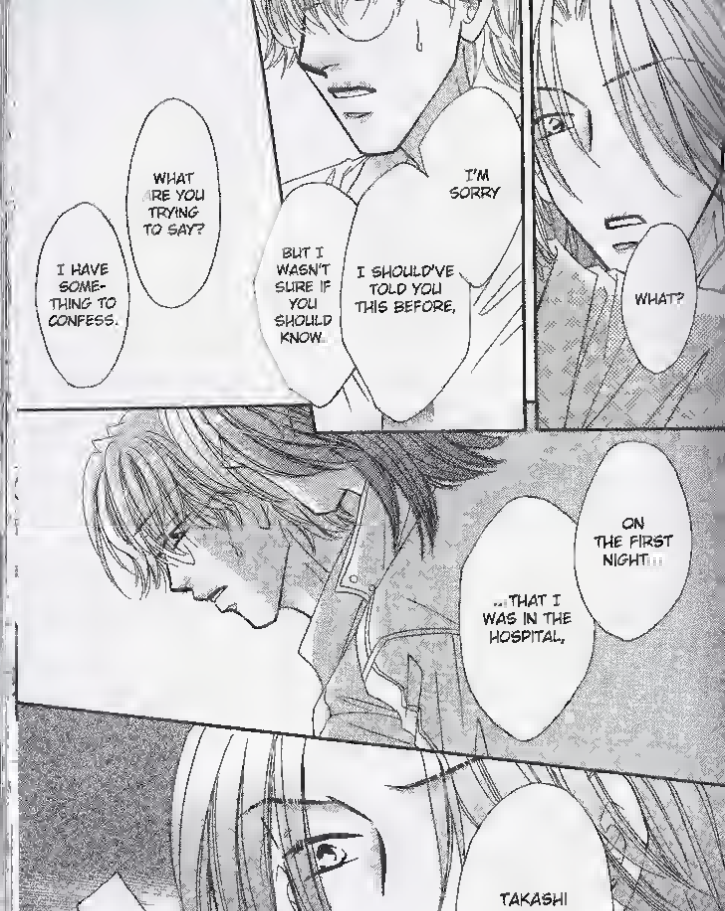
WHAT?
I'M SORRY
I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU THIS BEFORE,
BUT I WASN'T SURE IF YOU SHOULD KNOW.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
I HAVE SOMETHING TO CONFESS.
ON THE FIRST NIGHT...
...THAT I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL,
TAKASHI CAME TO MY ROOM.
!

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I'm sorry
I'm so incredibly sorry!
I never meant for this to happen!
I know
It's all right
The doctor told me I'd be moved out of ICU the day after tomorrow
Can you move around yet?
Haha!
Thankfully the wound wasn't as serious as it looked.

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I'll never leave your side again!
I can take you to a doctor friend of mine
Things will be okay!
What do you mean?
This time I swear I won't let *anyone* get in the way.
Takashi.

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I won't accept this!
No one could possibly love you more than I do!
Grip
But what about me?!
I'm in love with Yanagi-kun
Then tell me
Why do I suffer so much when I'm with you?

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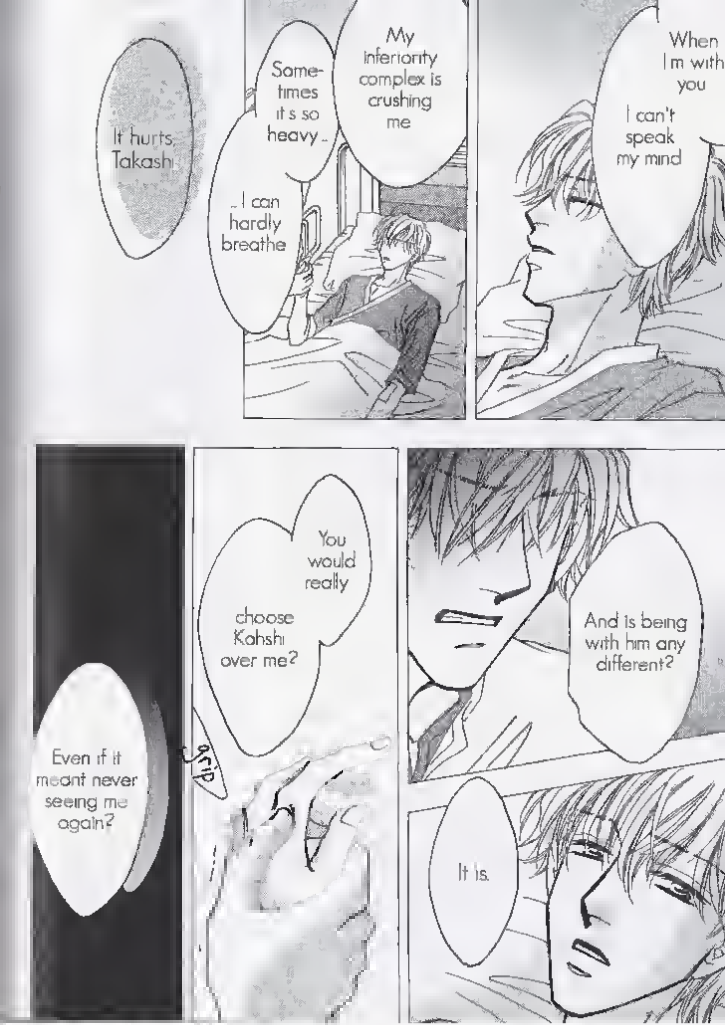
It hurts, Takashi
Sometimes it's so heavy...
...I can hardly breathe
My inferiority complex is crushing me
When I'm with you
I can't speak my mind
Even if it meant never seeing me again?
grip
You would really choose Kahshi over me?
And is being with him any different?
It is.

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...AFTER I'VE ALREADY BETRAYED HIM LIKE THIS...
I HAVE A FEELING THAT TAKASHI WON'T SHOW UP AGAIN...
THAT'S WHY I KEEP SAYING IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT
Nail scratch-es...
I THOUGHT FOR SURE IT'D ALL BEEN A DREAM.
WHEN MORNING CAME,
...VERY GOOD WITH WORDS ANYWAY.
I'VE NEVER BEEN...
I KNOW I'M PROBABLY NOT BEING VERY CONVINCING
I'M SORRY...

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Y-
YANAGI-KUN?!
I JUST WANT TO STAY LIKE THIS FOR A WHILE...
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T DO ANYTHING...
...
ME TOO.
Just saying "I love you" to each other...
...doesn't necessarily mean that we'll get our happily ever after

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But..
—the one thing I'm certain about is that we'll keep going. Together.
Because we have love
But why isn't he doing anything?
I'm already healed. (Heavy sarcasm)
touch / END

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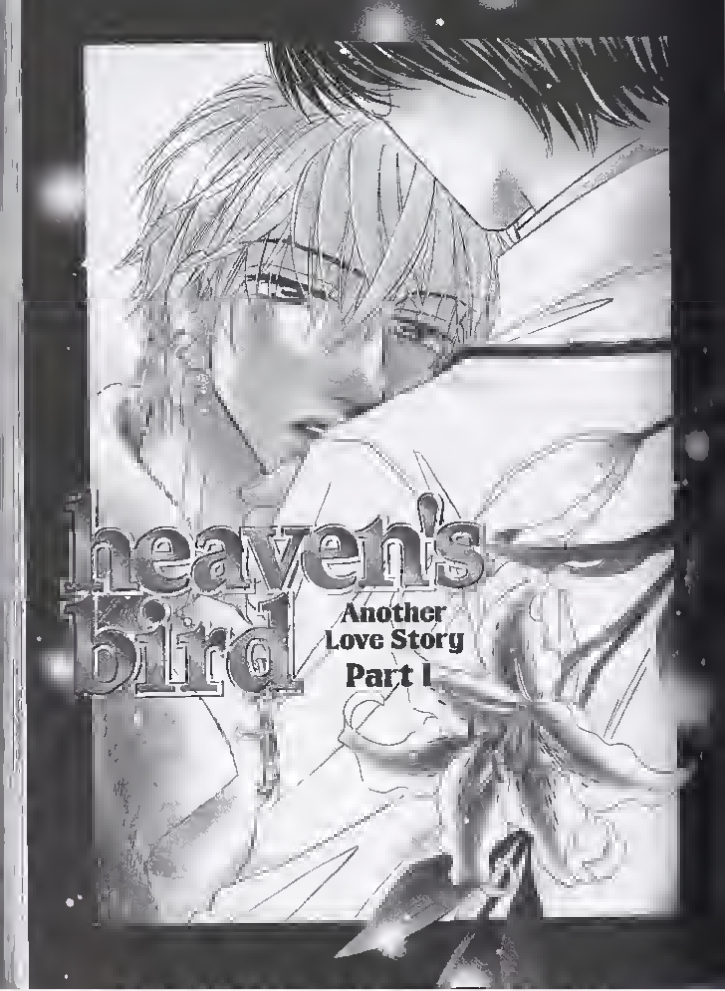

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breath

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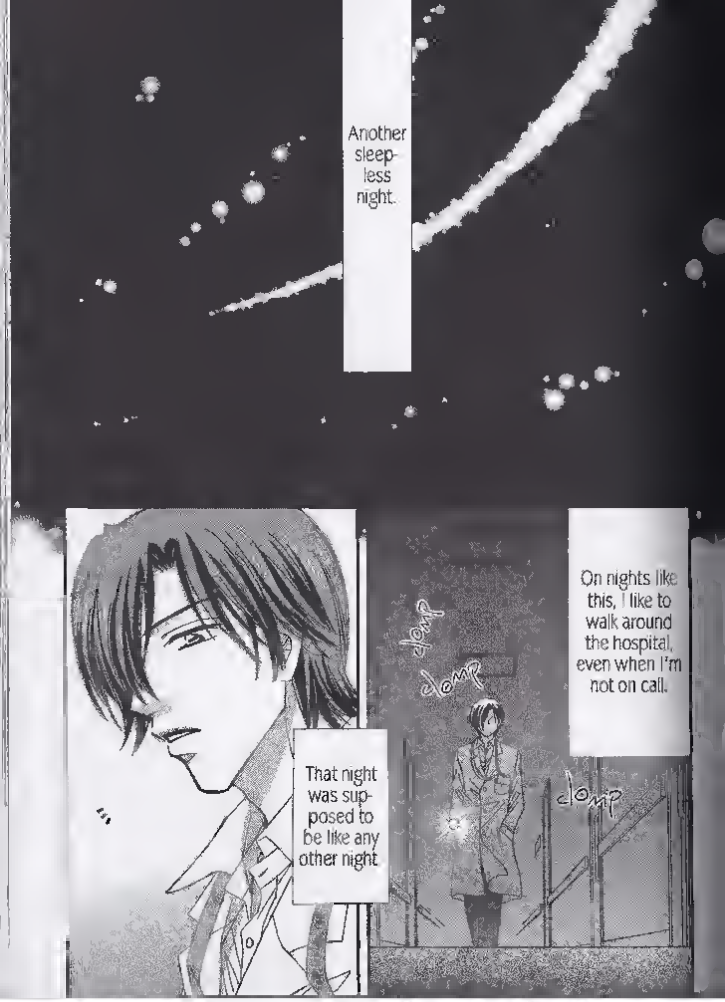
Another sleep-less night.
That night was sup-posed to be like any other night.
On nights like this, I like to walk around the hospital, even when I'm not on call.
clomp
clomp
clomp

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Then all of a sudden, a young man appeared in front of me.
and whispered with a grin
Are you *that* fascinated by me?
Then don't be shy about it

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IT'S STILL ONLY 6 IN THE MORNING.
WHAT'S THIS?
LEAVING SO SOON?
I'VE GOT A STUDY SESSION TO ATTEND.
And from that day on
the man who called himself "Ten" began staying at my house.

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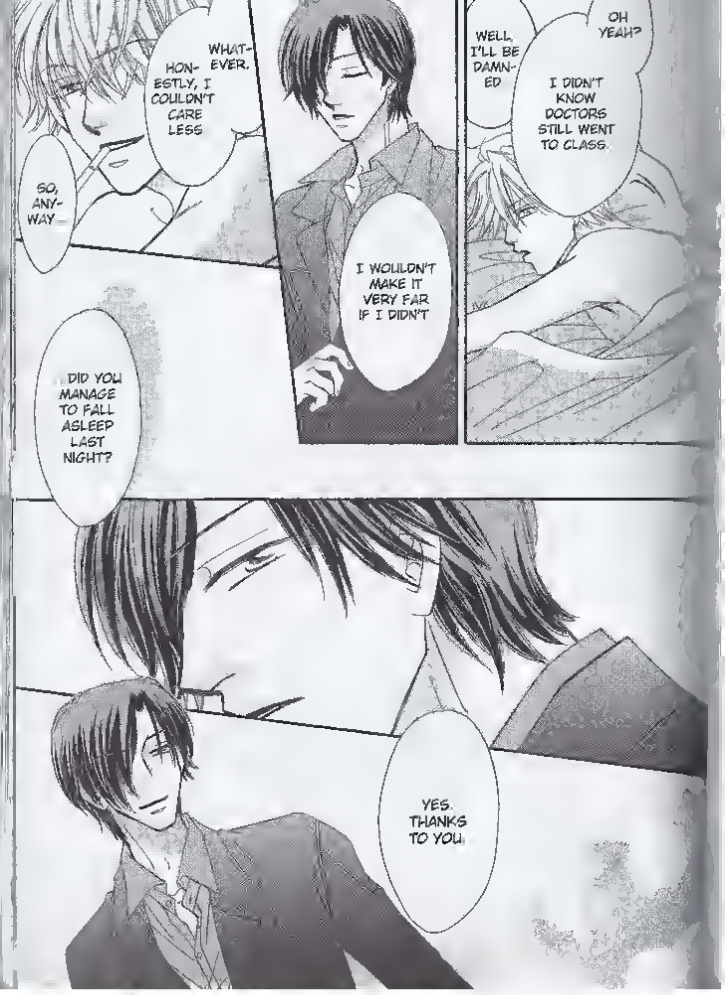
SO, ANY-WAY...
WHAT-EVER. HON-ESTLY, I COULDN'T CARE LESS
I WOULDN'T MAKE IT VERY FAR IF I DIDN'T
WELL, I'LL BE DAMN-ED
OH YEAH?
I DIDN'T KNOW DOCTORS STILL WENT TO CLASS.
DID YOU MANAGE TO FALL ASLEEP LAST NIGHT?
YES. THANKS TO YOU.

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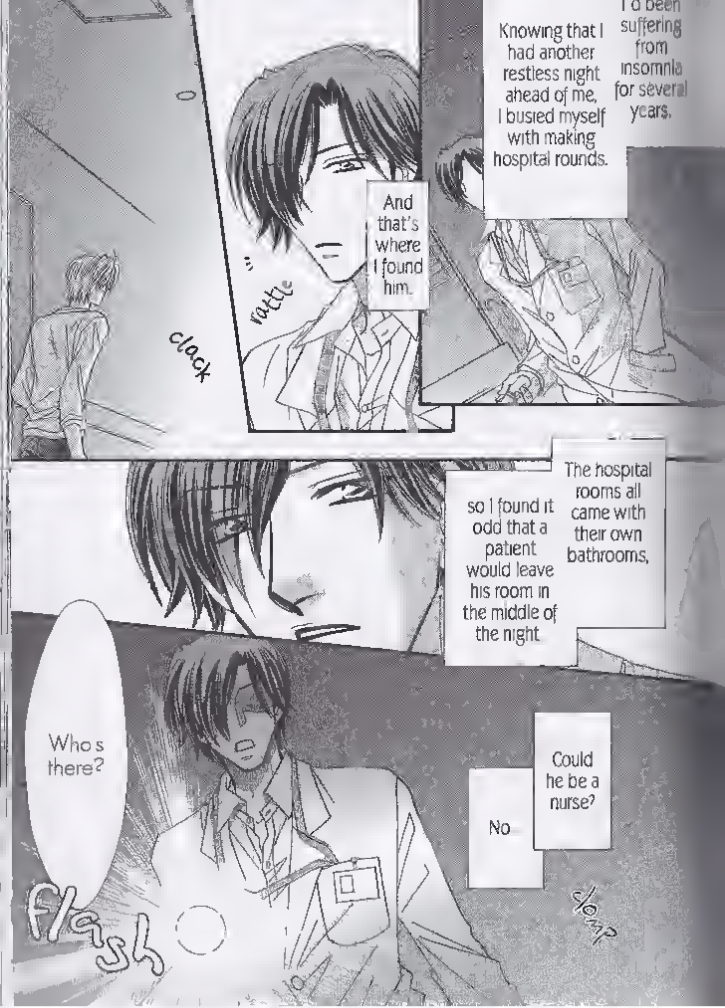
I'd been suffering from insomnia for several years.
Knowing that I had another restless night ahead of me, I busied myself with making hospital rounds.
And that's where I found him.
rattle
clack
The hospital rooms all came with their own bathrooms,
so I found it odd that a patient would leave his room in the middle of the night.
Who's there?
flash
Could he be a nurse?
No
clomp

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Better call security!
clank
clank
clang clang
Sorry to say this, but...
...it's a dead end
It takes a faculty ID card to work the door when it's not an emergency

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So who are you?!
grip
And what are you doing loitering around here?
Nothing criminal
—!
badump
I just came to pay my poor big brother a visit

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I've got my own reasons if you don't mind
I couldn't make it during the day
I had no other choice
Like I said visitors aren't allowed this late at night
Visiting hours are over
But
But something about this man...
made me hesitate
I wanted to tell him that I didn't believe him
hmph
I wouldn't be so sure
A nurse let me in when I asked nicely
Said it'd be our little secret

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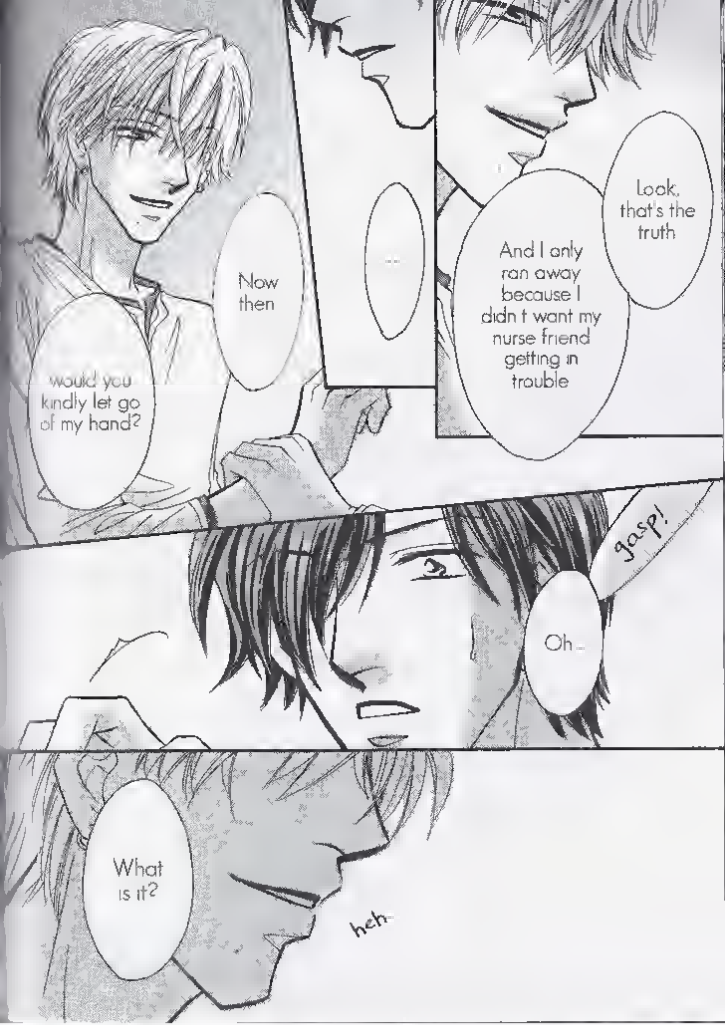
Look, that's the truth
And I only ran away because I didn't want my nurse friend getting in trouble
...
Now then
would you kindly let go of my hand?
gasp!
Oh...
What is it?
heh

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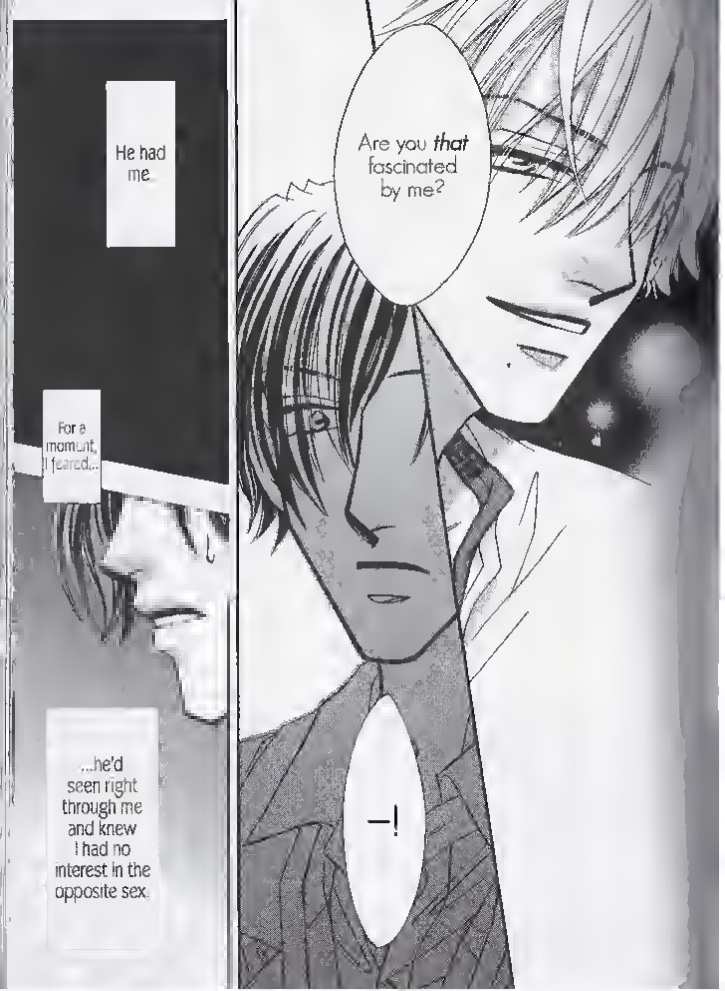
He had me...
For a moment, I feared...
...he'd seen right through me and knew I had no interest in the opposite sex.
Are you *that* fascinated by me?
—!

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And it only took a split second for him...
to realize the truth.
I see
Then don't be shy about it
I just so happen to have no place to go.
Would you take in a stranger like me?

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What's the matter?
Don't tell me you forgot what we did last night
Uh...
Morning
You're kidding right?
You seriously haven't slept until now?
I've had insomnia for a few years now
It'd been months since I'd slept even a few hours
No
It's not that
I was shocked

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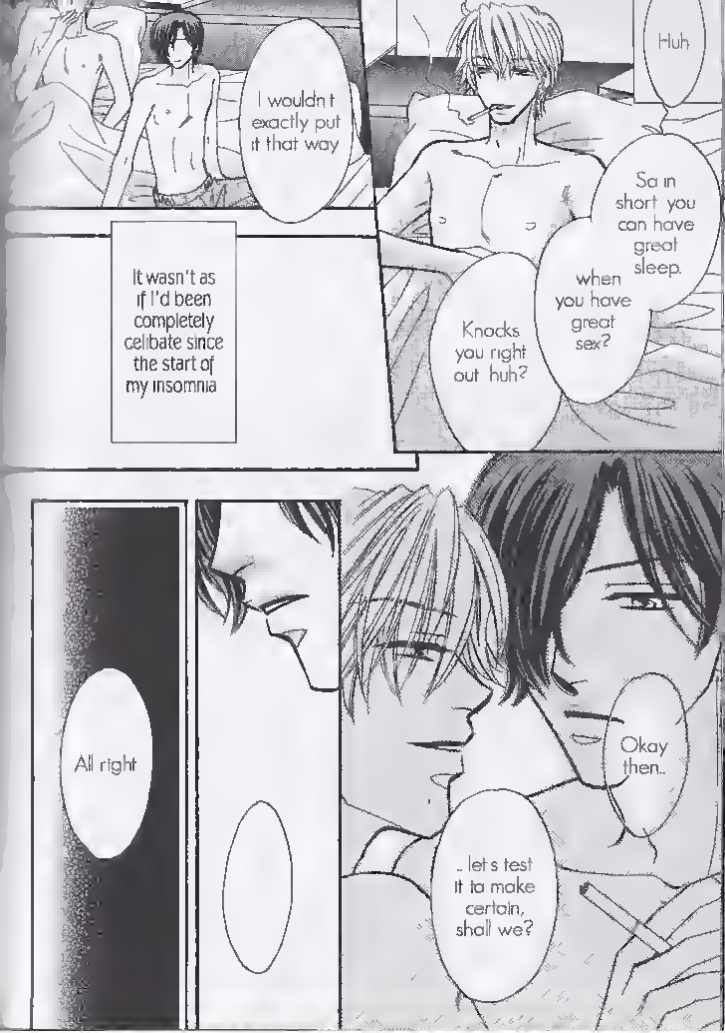
I wouldn't exactly put it that way
Huh
So in short you can have great sleep.
when you have great sex?
Knocks you right out huh?
It wasn't as if I'd been completely celibate since the start of my insomnia
All right
Okay then..
..let's test it to make certain, shall we?

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It'd been a few weeks since then.
DOCTOR MINAFUJI!
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECOVERY.
THEY'RE RELEASING YOU TODAY, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN
WE ALL KNOW IT'S THANKS TO YOU
I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!
Now if you'll excuse me.
OH, BUT OF COURSE.
I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE!
I WAS JUST ON MY WAY TO SEE YOU!
OH, THANK GOODNESS!

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After that I still couldn't manage to take naps during the day
I slept like a baby
But after I'd satisfied myself with Ten at home
That's why—
YOU REALLY DO MAKE A GREAT PILLOW
EX-CUSE ME
ARE YOU REFER-RING TO ME?
COME AGAIN?

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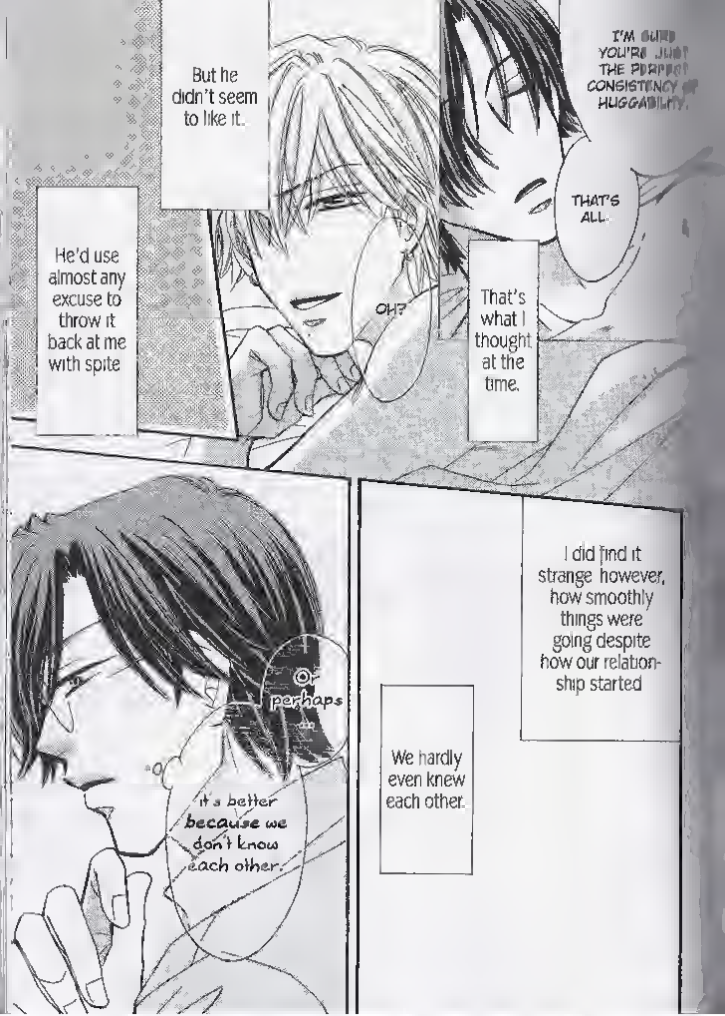
But he didn't seem to like it.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE JUST THE PERFECT CONSISTENCY OF HUGGABILITY.
THAT'S ALL.
He'd use almost any excuse to throw it back at me with spite
OH?
That's what I thought at the time.
I did find it strange however, how smoothly things were going despite how our relationship started
We hardly even knew each other.
Or perhaps
it's better because we don't know each other.

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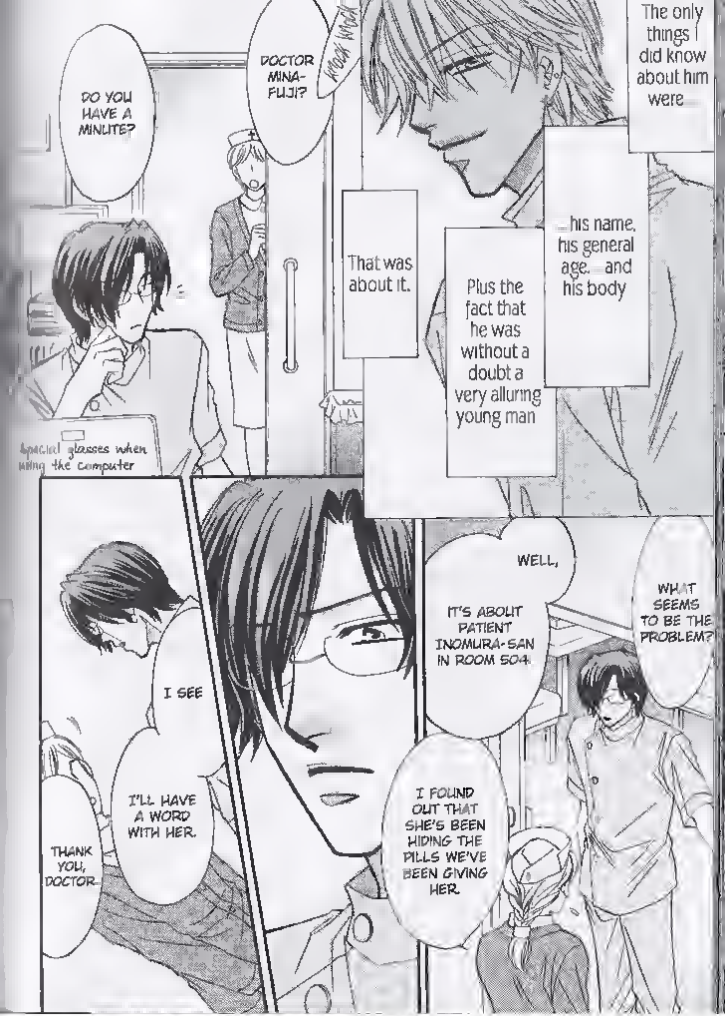
The only things I did know about him were...
...his name, his general age... and his body
That was about it.
Plus the fact that he was without a doubt a very alluring young man
KNOCK KNOCK
DOCTOR MINAFUJI?
DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?
Special glasses when using the computer
WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?
WELL,
IT'S ABOUT PATIENT INOMURA-SAN IN ROOM 504.
I FOUND OUT THAT SHE'S BEEN HIDING THE PILLS WE'VE BEEN GIVING HER.
I SEE
I'LL HAVE A WORD WITH HER.
THANK YOU, DOCTOR.

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INO-MURA-SAN,
I HEAR YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TAKING YOUR MEDICATIONS.
WHY HAVE YOU BEEN HIDING THEM?
I'M SORRY DOCTOR,
BUT I GET SO QUEASY WHEN I TAKE THEM.
I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY-MORE
I SUP-POSE...
NOW PROMISE ME YOU'LL TAKE YOUR MEDS.
OKAY?
THEN WE'LL GIVE YOU SOME-THING FOR AN UPSET STOMACH ALONG WITH IT.
Now I'm curious
..Ino-mura-san has been taking her meds.
I won-der if...
HERE, INOMURA-SAN,
YOUR PILLS FOR TODAY.
And I'm not leaving until I see you take them.

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BUT I'LL FEEL SICK IF I TAKE THEM!
PLEASE, NURSE...
THESE PILLS HAVEN'T BEEN DOING ME ANY GOOD!
IT WORRIES ME!
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I CAN TRUST WHAT THE DOCTOR SAYS!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
DOCTOR MINAFUJI IS A GOOD MAN!
HE EVEN GAVE YOU A PRESCRIPTION FOR STOMACH MEDICINE
NOW GO ON SWALLOW THEM.
It's difficult to gain people's trust,

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I CAN'T TALK TO...
...MY PATIENTS THAT WAY...
IF YOU DON'T TAKE THE PILLS LIKE YOU'RE TOLD,
YOU'LL NEVER GET BETTER, MORON. END OF STORY
YOU MIGHT AS WELL JUST TELL HER
WHAT THE HELL?
pffff
WE LIVE IN AN ERA WHERE PATIENTS HAVE A CHOICE OF HOSPITALS.
True, there are some people who believe that...
IF I CAN'T EVEN GET THE SICK TO TRUST ME,
THEN ...
freak
ISN'T THE DOCTOR ALWAYS RIGHT?
heh
IF I SAY THAT,
SHE'D SUE ME IN A HEART-BEAT.

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I CAN SEE YOU'RE THE TYPE TO OVERTHINK THINGS.
THAT MEANS THERE'S OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME
MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT.
YOU MAY BE RIGHT.
What makes this case so difficult
...is that the pills alone aren't going to make her any better.
It's only a feeble attempt to keep her illness from worsening.

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I GUESS THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO CAN'T BRING THEMSELVES TO DO THAT, THOUGH
There may not come a day when she can ever leave the hospital.
I can't thank you enough!
IF THINKING ABOUT IT ISN'T GOING TO CHANGE ANYTHING,
THEN YOU MIGHT AS WELL NOT WASTE YOUR TIME
YOU SOUND LIKE...
...YOU KNOW SOMEONE OTHER THAN ME WHO'S LIKE THAT

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Hey,
BINGO.
HE WAS ONE HELL OF AN AWKWARD GUY,
IRRESISTIBLY ADORABLE...
. AND A TRAITOR TO BOOT.
THERE WAS SOME-ONE LIKE THAT.. . I KNEW VERY CLOSELY.
TRAITOR? HOW?
YOU REALLY WANNA KNOW THE STORY?

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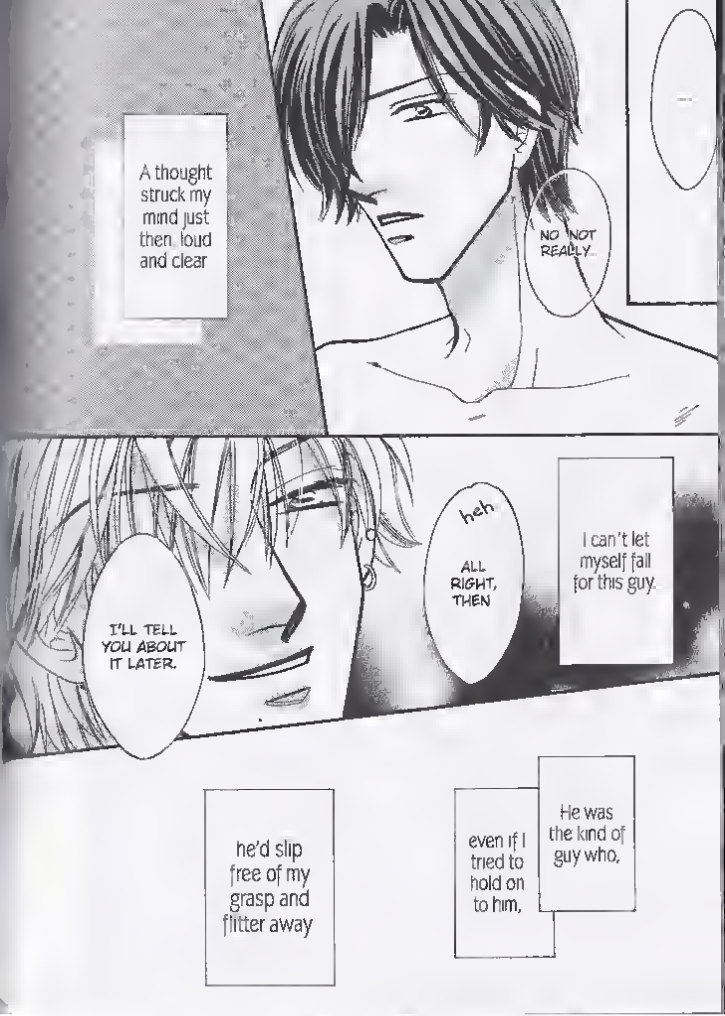
A thought struck my mind just then, loud and clear
NO, NOT REALLY
I can't let myself fall for this guy.
heh
ALL RIGHT, THEN
I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT LATER.
He was the kind of guy who,
even if I tried to hold on to him,
he'd slip free of my grasp and flitter away

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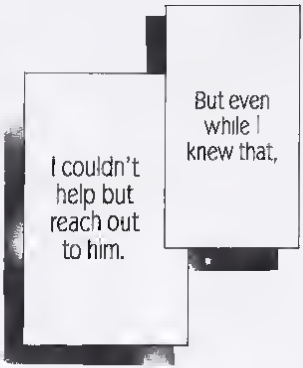

heaven's bird Part I / END

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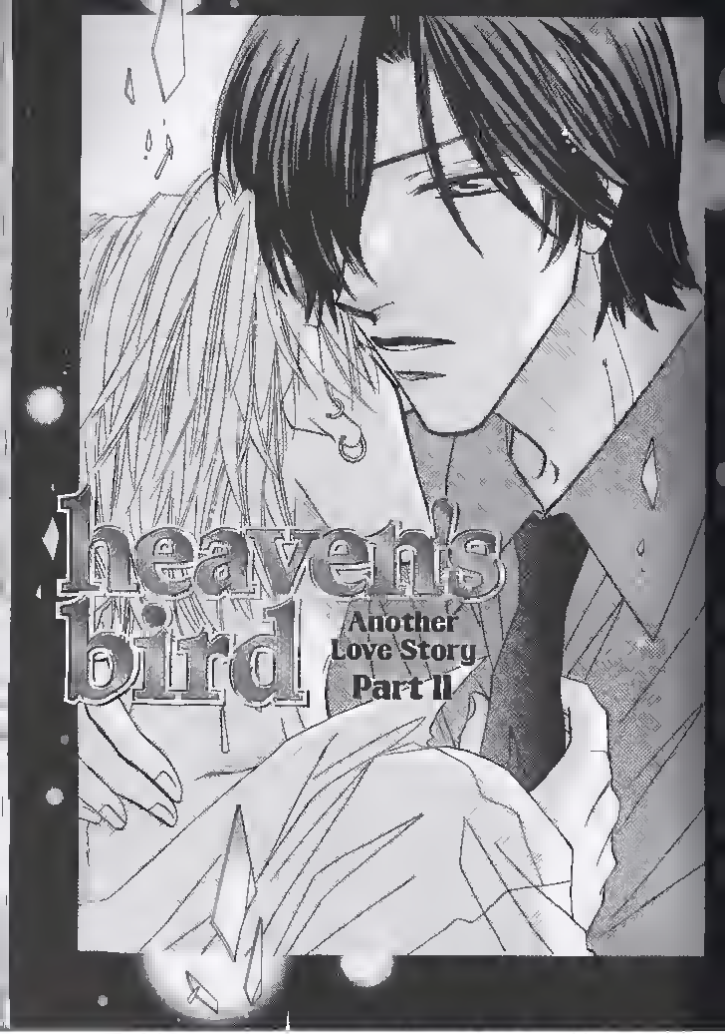

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There was nothing more I needed other than him.

I was happy. I was content.

All my life Arata was the only thing I saw.

Dr. Minafuji

...this our brand-new character making an appearance right in the middle of the final volume. Because of the hairstyle I gave him everyone at the studio kept calling him "Kitaro". Ha ha. Add the tone to Kitaro and stuff like that.

Anyway, I should say here that he makes one lousy seme. I have no idea why I have a thing for all these half-assed semes. (^^)

T/N *Kitaro is a character from the classic manga series "Gegege no Kitaro"
**Seme is a term for a dominant partner in a homosexual relationship.

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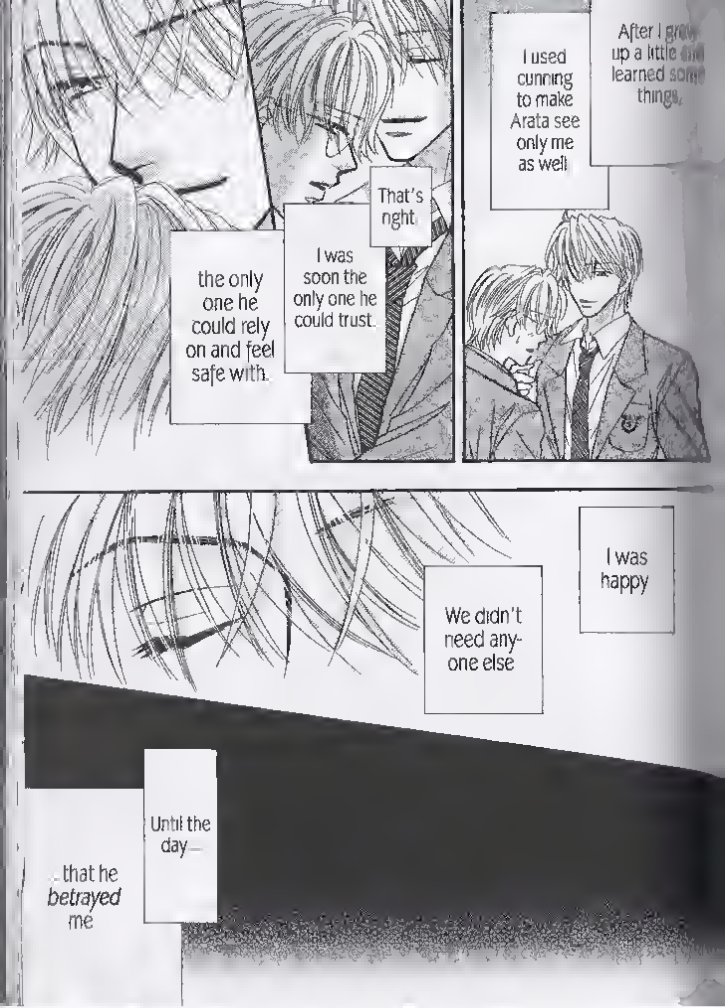
the only one he could rely on and feel safe with.
I was soon the only one he could trust.
That's right.
I used cunning to make Arata see only me as well.
After I grew up a little and learned some things.
We didn't need anyone else
I was happy
Until the day—
...that he *betrayed* me

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I can't be with you anymore
He had the gall to choose someone else over me.
No, Takashi!
He told me he'd fallen in love with another man...
This can't go on
...and rejected me
...!
Even if it meant losing me forever,
he still didn't change his mind.

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Hell, he can do whatever he wants.
Why should I care?
I don't need damned traitors in my life!
And yet, all I can feel now...
That's what I thought when I left Arata's hospital room
...is an intense sense of *loss*.

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At least that way, Arata would have been–
Maybe it would have been better if I'd just broken him then and there
At least that way...
BGM
TEN?

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He's a doctor in the same hospital that Arata was kept at.
?
YUP.
I WAS FEELING SO HORNY
AND WORRIED YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO COME BACK.
Right now...
HURRY.
ANOTHER MINUTE AND I WAS GOING TO MASTURBATE.
he's my "landlord," read "sex friend."
TICK

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SHEESH
YOU WON'T EVEN GIVE ME TIME TO TAKE A SHOWER?
SO?
ARE WE DOING THIS OR NOT?
I REALLY SPOIL YOU ROTTEN
He really did come
at the right time
Heh heh

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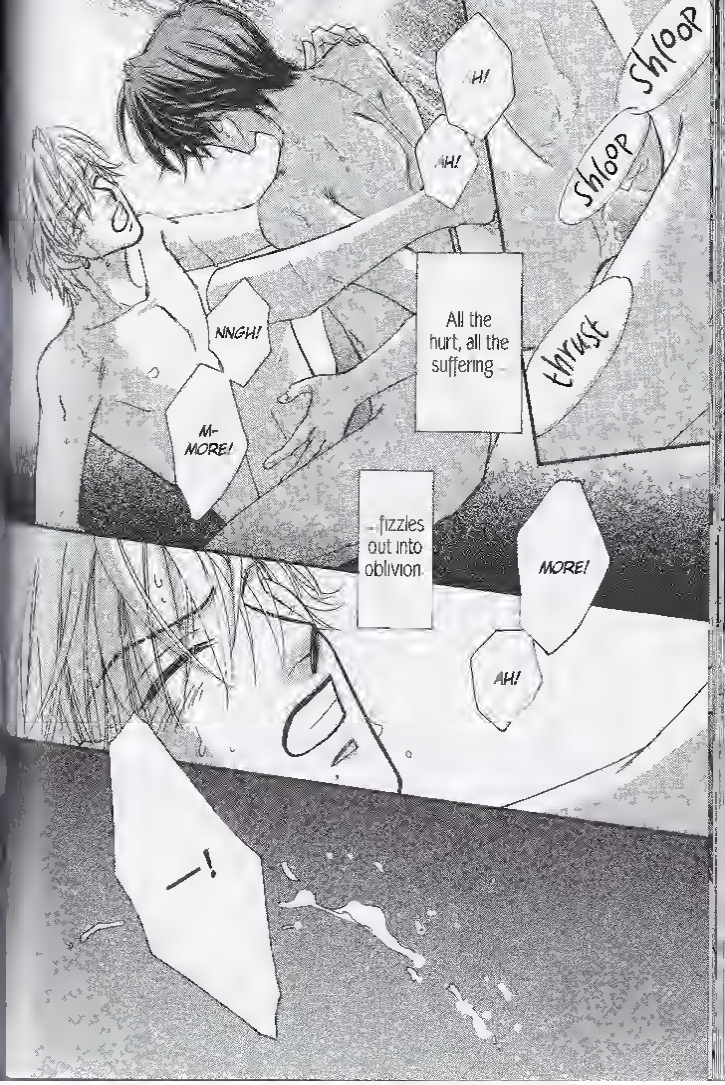

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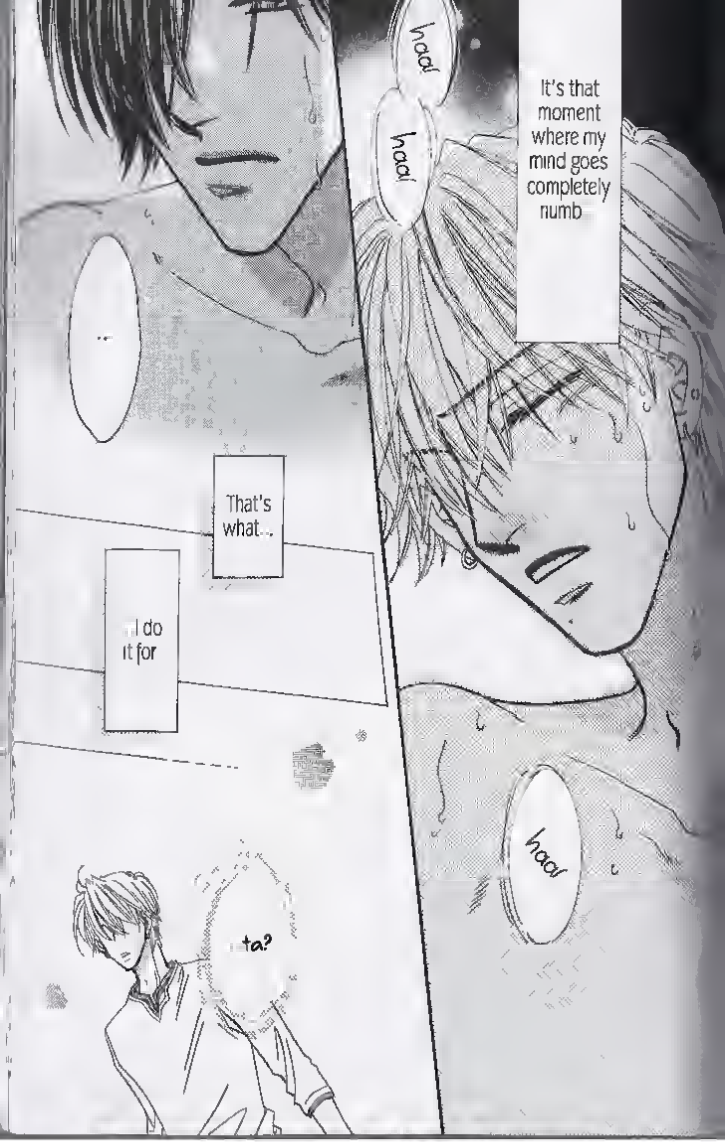

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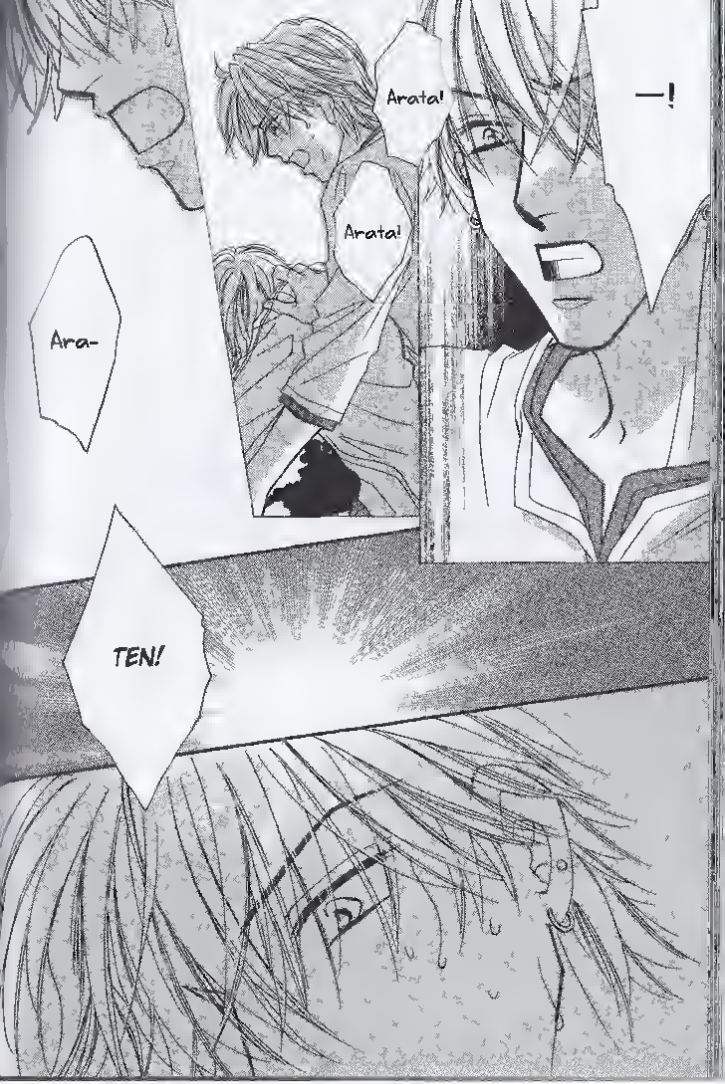

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HE'S DOING QUITE WELL, ACTUALLY.
HE CAME IN FOR A ROUTINE CHECKUP AFTER HE WAS RELEASED, AND THERE WERE NO MAJOR PROBLEMS
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT KIRISHIMA ARATA-KUN, RIGHT?
DON'T WORRY
EXCUSE ME?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS ASKING.
I'M ASKING HOW IN THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ARATA'S NAME!
"ARATA."
YOU'VE BEEN CALLING OUT HIS NAME IN YOUR SLEEP ALL ALONG
...
YOU HAVEN'T REALIZED YET, HAVE YOU?

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THE DAY WE MET,
I REMEMBERED SEEING THAT SAME NAME ON THE DOOR YOU LEFT FROM
501
I THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE A CONNECTION.
AND WHEN I SAY "ALL ALONG," I MEAN FOR A FEW WEEKS NOW.
I COULDN'T HELP BUT LOOK INTO IT.
DID YOU HAPPEN TO INTERROGATE HIM DURING HIS "ROUTINE CHECKUP"?
haha
ARATA CAN BE A LITTLE SLOW, SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN EASY TO GET INFORMATION OUT OF HIM.
I'M SORRY, "INTERROGATE"?

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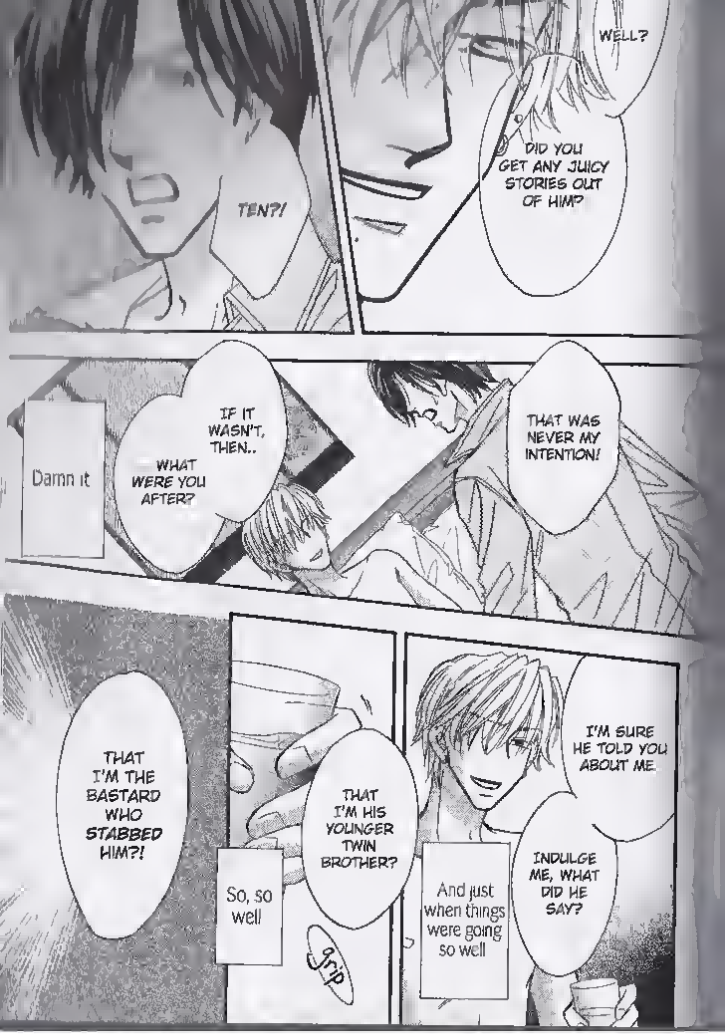
WELL?
DID YOU GET ANY JUICY STORIES OUT OF HIM?
TEN?!
THAT WAS NEVER MY INTENTION!
IF IT WASN'T, THEN..
WHAT WERE YOU AFTER?
Damn it
I'M SURE HE TOLD YOU ABOUT ME.
INDULGE ME, WHAT DID HE SAY?
And just when things were going so well
THAT I'M HIS YOUNGER TWIN BROTHER?
So, so well
GULP
THAT I'M THE BASTARD WHO STABBED HIM?!

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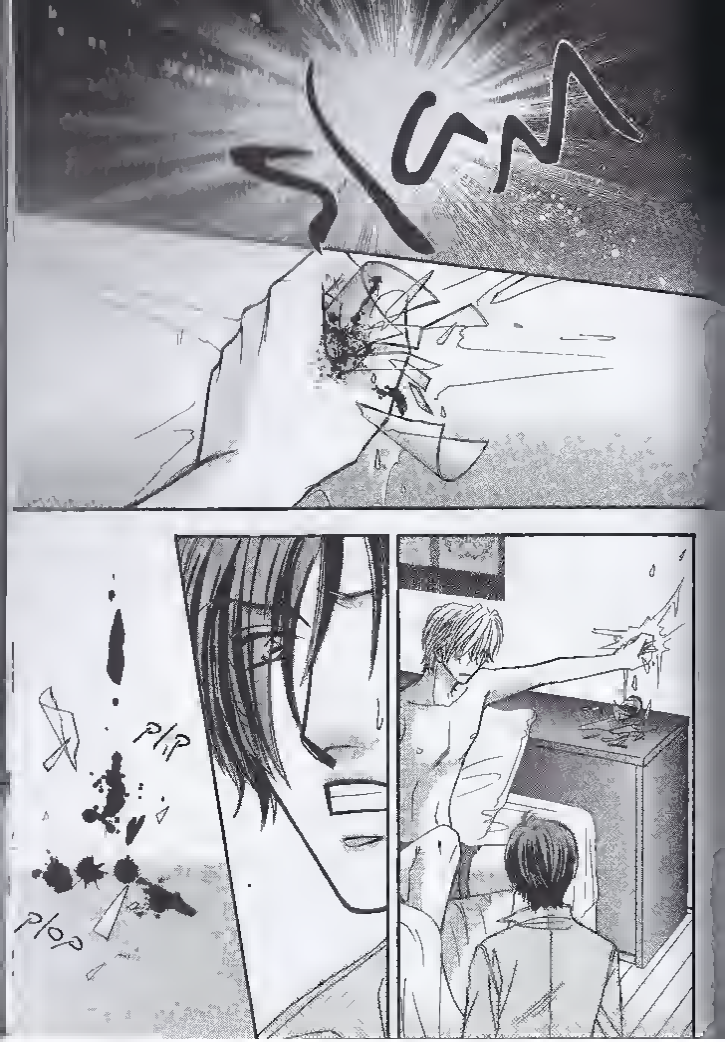

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IT WAS A FUN RIDE, BUT I'M NOT THANKING YOU FOR ANYTHING.
Aw, shit
RIP
...
YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT?
Hey!!
WAIT, YOU'RE NOT LEAVING, ARE YOU?
HANG ON!
IT'LL CLOSE UP BEFORE YOU KNOW IT
YOU CAN'T GO ANYWHERE WITH YOUR HAND LIKE THAT!

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FORGET IT.
THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN DO THAT HERE WE SHOULD GO TO THE HOSPITAL-
...CONSIDER GETTING STITCHES FOR THIS.
BUT YOU REALLY SHOULD.
I DON'T CARE ANYMORE
TEN?
I JUST DON'T...
...CARE ABOUT ANYTHING ANYMORE

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TEN, WHAT-
ARATA ALREADY TOLD ME HE DOESN'T NEED ME ANYMORE.
AND IF I DON'T HAVE ARATA,
...THEN NOTHING ELSE MATTERS
I DON'T MATTER.
DON'T SAY THAT.
I MAY NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU TWO,
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T SAY SUCH DEPRESSING THINGS

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I BET ARATA TOLD YOU ALL SORTS OF STUFF.
YOU HEARD ME BEFORE, RIGHT?
YOU SURE ARE ONE STRANGE GUY.
...
RATA-KUN NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.
PFFT!
YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN I MIGHT SNAP AND STAB YOU TOO!
I'M THE ONE WHO STABBED HIM.

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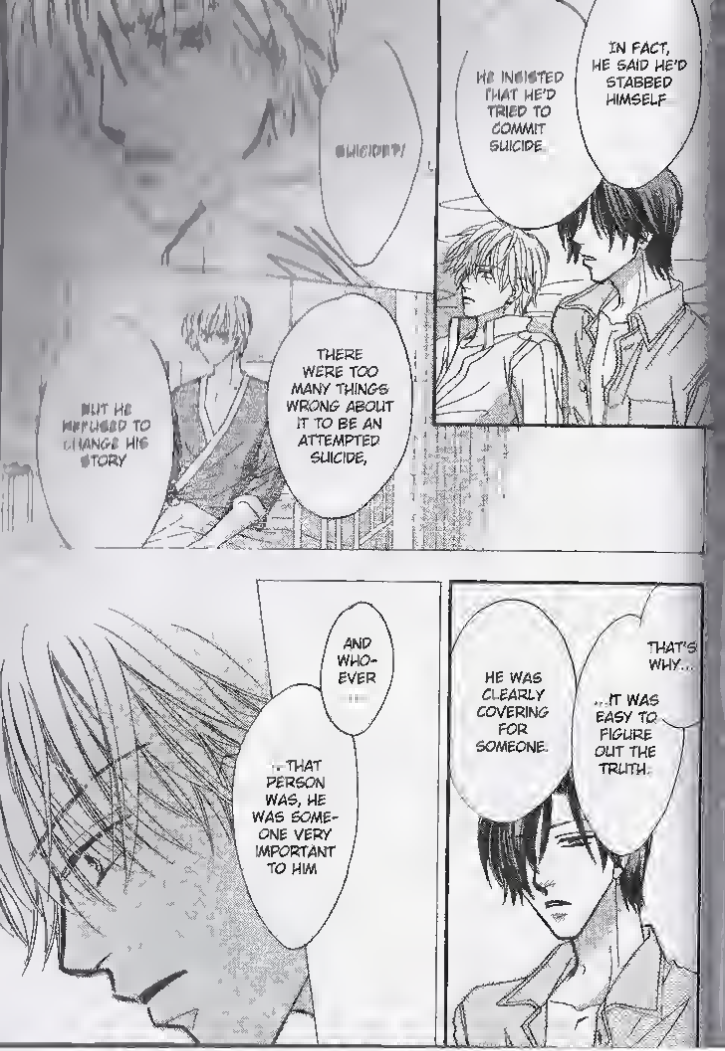
SUICIDE?!
BUT HE REFUSED TO CHANGE HIS STORY
THERE WERE TOO MANY THINGS WRONG ABOUT IT TO BE AN ATTEMPTED SUICIDE,
HE INSISTED THAT HE'D TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
IN FACT, HE SAID HE'D STABBED HIMSELF
AND WHO-EVER
...THAT PERSON WAS, HE WAS SOME-ONE VERY IMPORTANT TO HIM
HE WAS CLEARLY COVERING FOR SOMEONE.
...IT WAS EASY TO FIGURE OUT THE TRUTH.
THAT'S WHY...

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YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT AS A DOCTOR WITH THAT ATTITUDE
IF YOU KEEP LETTING YOUR EMOTIONS GET IN THE WAY,
YOUR NERVES WILL BE FRAZZLED IN NO TIME.
THAT MUST BE WHY I GOT INSOMNIA, JUST LIKE YOU SAID. TEN
OH, RIGHT.
I DID SAY THAT.
YUP.
HUH.

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YOU'D BETTER TAKE CARE OF ME UNTIL I'M BETTER.
IT DOESN'T ...
... HAVE TO BE JUST UNTIL YOU'RE BETTER, YOU KNOW.
Creak
Just as long as...
OKAY.
...
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
HOW ABOUT UNTIL YOU'RE SICK OF ME?

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...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HMM?
JUST SLEEPING.
SO WHAT AM I, A BODY PILLOW?
WOULD THAT BE A BAD THING?
I don't have to hear you say another man's name again,
then I'm staying with you for keeps
squeeze

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Ever since I was a child,
I'd always had just Arata.
NOT REALLY.
...
NO...
But that's the one thing I can't allow
clench
I never want to do that again
I won't be able to stop myself from breaking him
No matter how much he cries or bleeds,
it wouldn't change anything.
I never wanted to break him before
But I know if I see him now, I'd want to

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All that matters...
no matter how much it hurts and stings.
So I'll never go back to him,
Arata's far too important to me for that.
Squeeze
is that I'm happy the way things are now
But.
that doesn't matter

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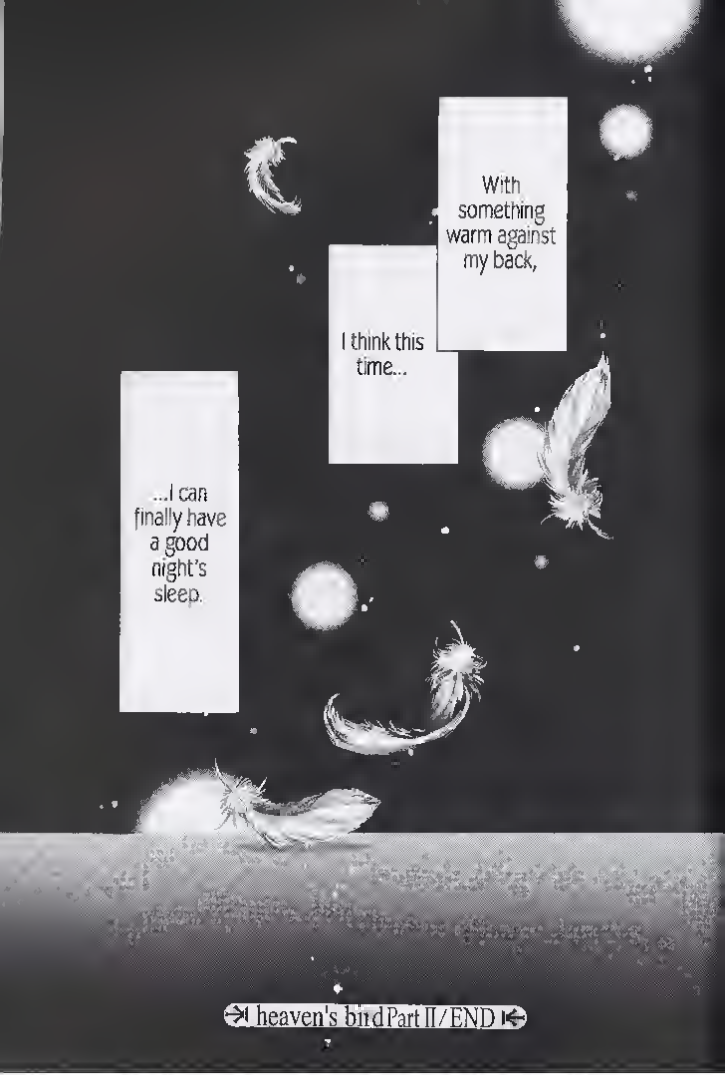

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PostScript

Hello there, everyone! This is Chifuru Ochi, and here you hold the final volume of "breath." Le sigh... It's finally over, and I have only you and your unwavering support to thank for making it this far. It's thanks to you that I was able to enjoy writing as much of it as I did. Thank you all so very very much m(_ _)m

Mom, that sounds like I'm about to quit writing manga! Haha!

Anyway, this volume is comprised of the main story's final two chapters as well as side stories (or should I call them the epilogues?) about Yanagi & Arata, as well as Ten-chan's story. As for the new PAGEs added, one can clearly see just how devastated Ten-chan was after being rejected by Arata. Ha ha. And, in a Ten-chan-like fashion, the new character of Dr. Minafuji came about. To be honest, he was supposed to be a really cool doctor when he first appeared. But surprise-surprise he ended up being a lousy seme(^^;). My most sincere apologies. (^^;) Still, it was a lot of fun creating a new character. And trust me, there's a reason as to why he has that Kitaro® style hair-over-one-eye look. Sadly, I never had the chance to explain exactly why he always has one eye covered. Haha.

I still haven't decided how it ends up for these two. (But) After all, the only reason Minafuji showed up at all was because Ten-chan was so vulnerable.

I wrote "My cats' diet was a complete failure."
On the back of this book's cover, you may have noticed something I wrote under "news."
A call from my editor, A-san.
Their diet was a failure?
May I ask
HOW ON EARTH THAT HAP-PENED?
She was rather blunt about it

T/N *"Kitaro" is a character from the classic manga series "Gegege no Kitaro."

In fact, I personally wrote Minafuji so that he could swoop in and save Ten-chan from himself. And no, I don't have any plans to continue their storyline. But if I ever do feel like writing about it again, I'd probably write the remaining episodes as a doujinshi(^^;) or something. Maybe I also didn't have many PAGEs to devote to Yanagi and Arata's lovey-dovey time. (^^;) Yup, I smell another doujinshi coming up. Haha.

Anyway, anyway! As I stated before at the start of this, thank you again so much for reading. I hope we see more of each other again in the future. My next work will probably be about Dr. Matsui. Until then!

Chifuru Ochi
2005-08

T/N **"Seme" is a term for a dominant partner in a homosexual relationship.
***"Doujinshi" is a self-published Japanese work.

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breath

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